

Imaginative Response in the Early Works of

D. H. Lawrence.

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1977.



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Abstract.

This thesis was planned as a result of reading the notebook drafts of D.H. Lawrence's early poems in the light of his later travel essays: Mornings in Mexico, Etruscan Places: and Apocalypse, his last full-length prose work. The special sensibility Lawrence discovered in the Etruscan tomb paintings, and in the early Pagan writers of the Apocalypse, is, I have argued, one he himself possessed and the main aim of this thesis has been to explore the artistic implications behind this sensibility as it developed from the time of his early poems up to the completion of Women in Love.

The terms 'Imaginative Response' and 'the imaginative process' denote the special meaning the Etruscan art of divination has, as defined by Lawrence himself, when applied to his own works. They refer to the creative process whereby objects, surroundings, or persons are perceived and described in the light of the emotion they evoke, until that emotion becomes clear and the poet can understand it. The word 'imaginative' refers to the type of mind driven to respond analytically in this way. So central are these concepts in Lawrence's work that characters in the early novels, stories and poems can be recognised by the success or failure of their imaginative response, upon which rests their ability to form appropriate judgements about themselves and others. Central to this also is the profound impression made upon Lawrence by his surroundings, and one of my aims has been to stress their dramatic function in his treatment of imaginative reactions.

Much of this thesis concerns the manuscript revisions Lawrence made as he sought to discover and evaluate forms of imaginative thinking. The nature of true response - the way this can be achieved and the barriers which prevent it - has been examined with its stylistic as well as thematic consequences in mind. Thus, a line of development has been made clear that explains many fundamental links between the earlier poetry and prose fiction and the major novels.

In revealing this line of development I have given attention to those poems which best exemplify Lawrence's ability in discovering his responses to people and places in his early life. Manuscript revision, both here and in The White Peacock proved particularly helpful in measuring how a successful style, one generally associated with his most admired early achievements, resulted from his direct treatment of problems surrounding imaginative thinking. My selection from his early works has therefore been made partly according to what is considered to be his best, partly according to how much manuscript evidence survives, but mainly according to the amount of concentration Lawrence was able to give to imaginative reactions. 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', 'Daughters of the Vicar', Sons and Lovers and 'The Prussian Officer' have therefore been treated intensively even though in the latter two cases no manuscript evidence was available. The Trespasser has been examined briefly as a case where Lawrence's presentation failed.

Close study of significant passages from texts has been continued in the final chapter on The Rainbow and Women in Love but here a more general discussion is conducted concerning

the problems involved in interpreting certain symbols and symbolic scenes. In Women in Love it is argued, Lawrence denies almost all his characters the possibility that by true imaginative self-discovery they may escape from a common, tragic fate.

Introduction: The significance of Etruscan Places.

I

Early in 1922 the Lawrences were invited by Earl Brewster to leave Taormina and visit Ceylon. In accepting, Lawrence had to postpone his visit to the New World. He sailed East in March of that year and only after having been to Ceylon, and from there to Australia, did he and Frieda finally reach New Mexico. They did not return to Italy until 1926, not long before Lawrence visited the Etruscan tombs. His long voyage took him beyond Europe for the first time, and half way round the world.

It was an amazing journey, coloured by the richness of meaning Lawrence found in the places he visited. It was also a discovery of new meanings by new contact, of preconceptions changed and changed again by experience, as we learn from the novels, essays and poems of this time. The experiences were not always salutary or consistently intense. Very often he was ill, and from Ceylon he wrote: 'I don't like the silly dark people or their swarming billions or their hideous little Buddha temples, like decked up pig-sties - nor anything. I just don't like it. It's better to see it on the cinema'.¹ In Australia, the flat bush country inspired him with a sense of isolation.

No single place he visited can be used simply to clarify the purpose behind Lawrence's travels. As a whole they suggest a

1. Collected Letters, ed. Moore, (1962). p.698-9.
For Lawrence and the cinema see also Etruscan Places, p.171.
Unless indicated, all page numbers cited from Lawrence's published works refer to the Penguin editions.

consistent struggle for understanding: a journey into unforeseen regions in himself as much as a widening of contact with the outer world. The results drew not only upon places, and peoples living present day lives, but upon ancient civilisations and religions. Past and present, Mexico, England, Australia, Germany and Italy could be illuminated through comparison: 'I must go up and down the world, I must balance Germany against Mexico and Mexico against Germany. I do not come for peace.'² He selected those ports of call that would serve his need to test, compare and evaluate.

The purpose of this study is to show that Lawrence's search did not so much represent a new stage in his development as a writer, but was more an amplification of qualities of mind fundamental to his creativity, and present at the onset of his career. His struggle to realise the nature and purpose of human existence had its equivalent in the poetic practise of his youth even before he grew conscious of its importance. The earliest poems show how Lawrence's response to objects, events, people and places provided the germinal point of his understanding of his own emotional complexity. Through careful analysis of his impressions and personal reactions, visual details and sounds developed symbolic meanings. In his later years this characteristic method becomes the long voyage from one place to another, one civilisation to another, to discover a way of life of the greatest moral value to mankind.

But Lawrence's characteristic method of exploration cannot be fully described unless his own ambivalent attitude to this method is first taken into account. Nowhere more than in Mexico was this

2. Collected Letters. ed. Moore. (1962). p. 763.

ambivalence evident. Lawrence was attracted and repelled by the Mexican Indian's potential for religious experience of a tribal, atavistic kind. He felt, however, that this potential was discharged as malevolence. To the white man, the Mexican atmosphere bristled with physical fear. Outsiders to the tribal feeling were treated with a suppressed hostility continually threatening eruption. Lawrence came to believe that the Mexican Indian's strength was also his weakness:

The Indian way of consciousness is different from and fatal to our way of consciousness. Our way of consciousness is different from and fatal to the Indian. The two ways, the two streams are never to be united. They are not even to be reconciled. There is no bridge, no canal of connexion. The sooner we realize, and accept, this, the better, and leave off trying, with fulsome sentimentalism, to render the Indian in our own terms. The acceptance of the great paradox of human consciousness is the first step to a new accomplishment.³

Mexico and the Indians failed to reflect any urge towards 'new accomplishment' as ultimately Lawrence realised. Their tribal unanimity made him sense the impossibility of any interchange, and this added an undertone to his admiration:

The Indian, singing, sings without words or vision. Face lifted and sightless, eyes half closed and visionless, mouth open and speechless, the sounds arise in his chest, from the consciousness in the abdomen. He will tell you it is a song of a man coming home from the bear-hunt... There is no individual, isolated experience. It is the hunting, tired, triumphant demon of manhood which has won against the squint-eyed demon of all bears. The experience is generic, non-individual. It is an experience of the human bloodstream, not of the mind or spirit. Hence the subtle incessant, insistent rhythm of the drum, which is pulsated like the heart, and soulless, and unescapable. Hence the strange blind unanimity of the Indian men's voices. The experience is one experience, tribal, of the blood-stream.⁴

3. Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places. p. 55.

4. Ibid. pp. 56-57.

Lawrence does not develop his observations into a doctrine of the supreme value of the Indian consciousness as one might anticipate from his fascination. The only values he does offer are those recognising the 'great paradox of human consciousness' or elsewhere the 'inconsistency of creation'.⁵ Only where he finds these values is he capable of the admiration he wanted to feel. They do not dispel the exciting, fearful undertone of foreboding:

To the Indian there is no conception of a defined God. Creation is a great flood, for ever flowing, in lovely and terrible waves. In everything, the shimmer of creation, and never the finality of the created. Never the distinction between God and God's creation, or between Spirit and Matter. Everything, everything is the wonderful shimmer of creation, it may be a deadly shimmer like lightning or the anger in the little eyes of the bear, it may be the beautiful shimmer of the moving deer, or the pine-boughs softly swaying under snow. Creation contains the unspeakably terrifying enemy, the unspeakably lovely friend, as the maiden who brings us our food in dead of winter, by her passion of tender wistfulness. Yet even this tender wistfulness is the fearful danger of the wild creatures, deer and bear and buffalo, which find their death in it.⁶

In his essay 'Indians and Entertainment' Lawrence distinguishes two modes of experience: that of observation and that of participation. In the context of the essay the words 'spiritual' and 'unspiritual' have precise meanings. The Western 'white', 'spiritual' form of entertainment Lawrence contrasts with the way the Indians entertain themselves in their dancing, in total participation, with no onlookers amongst them.⁷ They are not conscious

5. Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places. pp. 55 and 62.

6. Ibid. p. 61. The part played in Lawrence's passage by the maiden resembles that of the wife of Sir Bertilak de Hautdesert in 'Sir Gawayn and the Grene Knygt', whose advances bear a hidden menace associated with animals of the forest.

7. 'Spirit' is mentioned repeatedly. i.e. 'pure spirit', 'spirit-like consciousness... watchful spirit... we white creatures of spirit'. pp. 53-58. Ibid.

of themselves as individuals, while the white onlookers are there to assess and to understand a way of life quite unfamiliar to their own. The entertainment situation of dancing and watching exemplifies the contrasting ways of life, and Lawrence's style, as in the above extracts from Mornings in Mexico is simultaneously rhythmic and exploratory or informative. The Mexican Indian is neither capable of nor interested in Lawrence's spiritual struggle for understanding. The Westerners, however, are conditioned to the idea of actors and audience keeping apart. 'They all sit there, gods of the ideal mind, and survey with laughter or tears the realm of actuality.'⁸

It was in the nature of Lawrence's own style of writing and thinking to argue for a reconciliation between the 'spiritual' mode, and that of 'unspiritual' participation, between the white Western and the dark Indian forms of experience. In that phase of his prose style which developed after Sons and Lovers and distinguished The Rainbow and the writings of its period as a new venture, Lawrence attempted to fuse the two points of view.⁹ In thus rendering unconscious feelings articulate Lawrence enables the reader to participate in the emotions of his characters while also viewing with understanding the significant dramatic conflict. We are made to feel as the characters feel, while as readers we remain separate from them and so able to assess and understand them. Our invitation to do both is apparent not only in the mature novels but also in the later travel essays. Lawrence's descriptive power strives

8. Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places. p. 53.

9. For a study of these changes see A Study of Style: D.H. Lawrence's Prussian Officer Tales, M. Kalnins, Edinburgh University Thesis, (1972).

to offer us the 'spark' of 'contact' with the 'realm of actuality' so that his own and our cumulative assessment of the value of the countries and their inhabitants will not suffer the imbalance of a too abstracted, too 'spiritual' understanding. In the very last of his travel essays he wrote:

What one wants is a contact. The Etruscans are not a theory or a thesis. If they are anything, they are an experience.

And the experience is always ~~spoilt~~. Museums, museums, museums, object-lessons rigged out to illustrate the unsound theories of archaeologists, crazy attempts to...get into a fixed order that which has no fixed order and will not be co-ordinated!... Why must all experience be systematized? Why must even the vanished Etruscans be reduced to a system? They never will be. You break all the eggs, and produce an omelette which is neither Etruscan nor Roman nor Italic nor Hittite, nor anything else, but just a systematized mess.¹⁰

But the Indian mindlessness was too complete a contrast to the objects of Lawrence's attack here. In its own way the Indian order also seemed fixed, impenetrable, incapable of being altered by further experience or sensitive contact with lives other than its own. The Indian lacked all sense of himself as an individual, his dancing so different from the ancient drama of the Greeks, as Lawrence suggests, whose gods had evolved into separate beings, spectators of the human world. Yet Lawrence himself will not suppress other observations for the sake of a theory. In one vivid passage he describes the ancient Aztec gods:

The Aztec gods and goddesses are, as far as we have known anything about them, an unlovely and unlovable lot. In their myths there is no grace or charm, no poetry. Only this perpetual grudge...one god grudging another, the gods grudging men their existence, and men grudging the animals. The goddess of love is a goddess of dirt and prostitution, a dirt-eater, a horror, without a touch of tenderness. If the god wants to

10. Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places. p. 214.
Also, 'spark of contact' p. 51.

make love to her, she has to sprawl down in front of him, blatant and accessible.

And then, after all, when she conceives and brings forth, what is it she produces? What is the infant-god she tenderly bears? Guess, all ye people, joyful and triumphant!

Your never could.

It is a stone knife.¹¹

Lawrence delights in the Aztec gods' travesty of the immaculate conception. A characteristic method of writing, consistent throughout his work, was to extend one image to illuminate further observation, thus bringing the reader a sense of meaning supported by actuality, as for example in the following:

And to this day, most of the Mexican Indian women seem to bring forth stone knives. Look at them, these sons of incomprehensible mothers, with their black eyes like flints, and their stiff little bodies as taut and as keen as knives of obsidian. Take care they don't rip you up.¹²

An inward grip on the subject observed, and alertness to the sights and sounds of the outer world, are the natural elements upon which such an assessment is founded, for they were not merely a vehicle for expression, but a determinant of the response expressed, a matter of vision as well as of method. Wherever he found a balance of participation with understanding, of mind with blood, in 'delicate sensitiveness', Lawrence's search grew closer to its conclusion.¹³

Lawrence came back finally to Europe four years before his death. In March of 1927 he visited the Etruscan tombs with the purpose of writing a book about this pre-Christian people. On finding their paintings and the clutter of homely possessions the

11. Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places, p. 32.

12. Ibid. p. 33.

13. 'delicate sensitiveness' Ibid. p. 126.

Etruscan people had left with their dead, Lawrence celebrated his discoveries in four essays that are vividly descriptive and profoundly reflective.

He returned from Mexico after the exhaustion of The Plumed Serpent and a near-fatal attack of malaria. The writing that followed his recovery had already shown signs of a renewed clarification of his search. 'The Flying Fish', an unfinished story, mingles this clarification with despair of ever discovering in human form the ideals he sought. During his frequent sea voyages Lawrence must often have seen the schools of porpoises and flying fish described in this story rising from the ocean in front of the ship's prow. The clumsy, man-made vessel follows in the wake of a wonderful revelation:

And below, as yet untouched, a moment ahead, always a moment ahead, and perfectly untouched, was the lovely green depth of the water...one moment ahead of the ship's bows, so serene, fathomless and pure and free of time... And always, always, like a dream, the flocks of flying fish swept into the air, from nowhere...then gone again, vanished, without splash or evidence, gone... And the third morning there was a school of porpoises leading the ship... And what joy! what joy of life! what marvellous pure joy of being a porpoise within the great sea, of being many porpoises heading and mocking in translucent onrush the menacing, yet futile onrush of a vast ship!.. They moved in a little cloud... the last fish just touching with his tail-flukes the iron cut-water of the ship... Even the toucher, who touched the ship, would in a twinkling be changed... intertwining among one another, fading down to the dark blue shadow and strangely emerging again among the silent, swift others, in pale green water. All the time, so swift, they seemed to be laughing...mingling among themselves in some strange single laughter of multiple consciousness, giving off the joy of life, sheer joy of life, togetherness in pure complete motion... They gave off into the water their marvellous joy of life, such as the man had never met before... Men have not got in them that secret to be alive together and make one like a single laugh, yet each fish going his own gait... It would be wonderful to know joy as these fish know it. The life of the deep waters is ahead of us, it contains sheer togetherness and sheer joy. We have never got there. No wonder man, with his tragedy, was a pale and sickly thing in comparison! What

civilisation will bring us to such a pitch of swift laughing
togetherness, as these fish have reached?¹⁴

The 'swift laughing togetherness' of the fish in the unbroken translucent sea compacts a deep herd instinct with a sense of participating individual lives. This the Mexican Indians had lacked, Europe had lacked, and Lawrence's despair is summed up in the cry: 'We have never got there'. The fish have the slightest occasional contact with the iron ship but keep beyond it in a region of unrealised, permanent hopefulness that the ship's approach never penetrates. The image is one of the inescapable inadequacy of human effort to actualise its most valued state of being. But the hopefulness remains. In visiting the Etruscan tombs his hope was renewed once more, and rewarded. He found there a short period of human history which he saw as resembling that evanescent, ever recurrent moment of contact of the fish with the ship.

The four Etruscan essays have a sense of life; it is what they celebrate; the written style infected by and iterating its subject, so that the essays are at once totally serious and yet almost off-hand, pacey, casual. The words 'spontaneous', 'insouciant', 'evanescent', 'in proportion' describe the essays as they also describe what were, to Lawrence, essential qualities of Etruscan life. Lawrence, however, had not abandoned his capacity to discriminate, and spends a good deal of time above ground comparing certain aspects of modern life unfavourably with that found in the tomb paintings. He also sees remnants or intimations of an Etruscan inheritance still present in Northern Italy: a shepherd

14. 'The Flying Fish' see The Princess and Other Stories
pp. 107-112.

with a faun face: 'not deadened by morals...shy...with a strange non-moral calm' yet unable to dominate in modern life, and the asphodel: 'a sparky assertive flower' not a 'mysterious lily' as the name sounds, but exhibiting a 'reckless glory' a 'vivid¹⁵ éclat'.

Lawrence found in these effects a civilisation whose experience of life resembled his own feeling for what was of value to man, though it went deeper than reasoned ideals. The 'phallic consciousness' which created the proportions of the tombs bears no resemblance to the grudging aggression of its equivalent in tribal Mexico. No suppressed ferocity or sense of cruelty now predominates, but rather: 'a kind of homeliness and happiness...a stillness and a soothingness in^{/all} the air...a feeling that it was good for one's soul to be there'. There is no conflict in Lawrence's mind at this time, nor in what he perceives, between 'spiritual' and 'unspiritual' modes of experience. The terms have not been reconciled so much as surpassed. The Etruscans knew nothing of the psychic abyss that demands a spiritual voyage of comparison, revaluation and assessment, or of integrating the ego with unconscious forces that ignored may threaten its destruction. Their response to life was one of acceptance, not of horror, and of integration with their natural state. Their art had none of the monumental quality of that^{/of} post-Christian and Renaissance Europe, that which is made to last and resist its natural decline. Their houses were made of wood; their tombs, 'the houses of the dead' resembled bulbs, the buried seed in harmony with cyclic time and cluttered with objects used during daily, homely life. All this Lawrence admired without equivocation: 'Death, to

15. The asphodel, Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places
p. 104

the Etruscan, was a pleasant continuance of life... We have lost the art of living; and in the most important science of all, the science of daily life, the science of behaviour, we are complete ignoramuses. We have psychology instead.¹⁶

At no other time during his career had Lawrence expressed such certainty, and his perception of integration implicitly insists that vital problems had been solved. The way towards integration had been taken through many years of conflict, to end, unforeseeably, with the Etruscan tombs. There Lawrence recognised the nature of an integration reflecting his own state of mind. The passages of prose and the poetic images of this period of his life stand among the best he produced. Themes appearing in Etruscan Places had occurred throughout his work, but their treatment at other times conveyed Lawrence's frustration and despair.

First, at no other time was death thought of as 'pleasant', not merely tolerable, but more than that. To a people fulfilled in their daily life, death was natural and, so Lawrence believed, could even be welcomed. From The White Peacock, Sons and Lovers, Women in Love to Kangaroo and particularly in The Plumed Serpent it was a matter of horror and oppression, as often also were sexual relations. Secondly, Lawrence returns to favour two interests which will distinguish his work even without the now famous notions of his sexual theology, although at a deep level they are hardly separable from it. They represent an interest in both the pattern of ordinary behaviour, and the 'sense of touch'. In Etruscan Places Lawrence wrote:

16. 'Phallic consciousness', Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places. p. 107. 'homeliness and happiness', p. 105. 'wood/bulbs', p. 102. 'Continuance of life' p. 109. 'art of living' p. 158.

It is one of the rarest qualities, in life as well as in art. There is plenty of pawing and laying hold, but no real touch... Here, in this faded Etruscan painting, there is the quiet flow of touch that unites the man and woman on the couch, the timid boy behind, the dog that lifts his nose, even the very garlands that hang from the wall. 17

A third new theme is the importance of community, also connected with daily life, with touch, and with sexuality, of the interdependence of individuals, such as it occurs for example among the dolphins of 'The Flying Fish'. The individual seeks a society that will not require him to conceal or sacrifice his essentially distinct being. 'Spiritual' and 'unspiritual' modes of experience, or blood and mind, must not defy each other or undermine the sense of touch, the daily existence, or the community, and art must serve the final integration of all these matters.

The blending together of so many themes into single works makes Lawrence's development as a writer a fascinating but problematical phenomenon. At a certain depth, all the themes in his works are unified in a single complete life-achievement, yet the Lawrence of 1909, of 1916, and the Lawrence of 1926 resemble each other in ways that do exist but can rarely be described without isolating one from another. The importance in his work, of outside objects, the part played by what he called 'the circumambient universe'¹⁸ and the way it achieves, or fails to achieve symbolic value, the way it attracts or repels his sympathy, is one approach to the 'decided positive' that was peculiarly Lawrence's:

17. 'Sense of touch', Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places p. 143.

18. 'Circumambient universe' see 'Morality and the Novel' Phoenix, p. 528. 'This, if we knew it, is our life and our eternity: the subtle, perfected relation between me and my whole circumambient universe.'

What is it that man sees, when he looks at a horse? - what is it that will never be put into words? For a man who sees, sees not as a camera does when it takes a snapshot, not even as a cinema-camera, taking its succession of instantaneous snaps; but in a curious rolling flood of vision, in which the image itself seethes and rolls; and only the mind picks out certain factors which shall represent the image seen. That is why a camera is so unsatisfactory: its eye is flat, it is related only to a negative thing inside the box: whereas inside our living box there is a decided positive.¹⁹

A connecting link with the themes previously listed is that of artistic expression. Etruscan Places provides a definition of the kind of art constantly practised by Lawrence, a kind dependent upon this 'decided positive'. It was not entirely to be found in the tomb paintings, but was more directly associated with the science of augury. One aspect of Etruscan life was a preference for individual communities culturally linked yet each retaining its separate identity, something that still survives in modern Italy. To the Etruscans, religion and politics were mingled, the king-god, prince or Lucumo understood the symbolic meaning of the events and animals depicted in the paintings even though the artists possessed 'only the simple, uninitiated vision of the people'.²⁰ Below the prince were priests who practised the science of augury, and here one finds the importance of the 'decided positive' that requires an act of 'pure attention' to the outer world, an act of 'divination' and 'discovery'.²¹ Lawrence may well have interpreted the meaning of this science for his own purposes, but his definition sheds light on his own earliest and consistent practices as an artist, as well as on the religion he describes:

19. Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places, p. 171.

20. *Ibid.* pp. 149-150.

21. *Ibid.* pp. 152-153.

Birds fly portent ously on the walls of the tombs. The artist must often have seen these priests, the augurs, with their crooked, bird-headed staffs in their hand, out on a high place watching the flight of larks or pigeons across the quarters of the sky. They were reading the signs and ^{the} portents, looking for an indication, how they should direct the course of some serious affair. To us it may seem foolish. To them, hot-blooded birds flew through the living universe as feelings and premonitions fly through the breast of a man, or as thoughts fly through the mind. In their flight the suddenly roused birds, or the steady, far-coming birds, move wrapped in a deeper consciousness, in the complex destiny of all things. And since all things corresponded in the ancient world, and man's bosom mirrored itself in the bosom of the sky, or vice versa, the birds were flying to a portent ous goal, in the man's breast who watched, as well as flying their own way in the bosom of the sky... An act of pure attention, if you are capable of it, will bring its own answer. And you choose that object to concentrate upon which will best focus your consciousness. Every real discovery made, every serious and significant decision ever reached, was reached and made by divination. The soul stirs, and makes an act of pure attention, and that is discovery... Whatever object will bring the consciousness into a state of pure attention, in a time of perplexity, will also give back an answer to ^{the} perplexity.²² But it is truly a question of divination.

The purpose of this thesis will be to define Lawrence's art as an act of divination, and to explain the changing purposes and tensions that resulted from this impulse in his work. Lawrence saw, in the daily life of the Etruscans, an enlivened, natural relationship with the outer world, a relationship heightened by their art, which drew upon their surroundings as a source of signs and powerful symbols for that creative force which made the world and still, in Lawrence's view, orders our consciousness of the world. If Lawrence believed that that consciousness was extinct, he did not believe it was beyond resurrection. Like the Etruscans he sensed within his experience, and as a controlling part of it, the dynamic relatedness of nature's forms, each form the product of a single cosmic movement, yet each inwardly a reflection of others. Nature itself is a creator of

22. Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places. pp. 152-153.

metaphors and resemblances:

To the Etruscan all was alive; the whole universe lived; and the business of man was...to live amid it all. He had to draw life into himself, out of the wandering huge vitalities of the world. The cosmos was alive, like a vast creature. The whole thing breathed and stirred. Evaporation went up like breath from the nostrils of a whale, steaming up. The sky received it in its blue bosom, breathed it in and pondered on it and transmuted it, before breathing it out again. Inside the earth were fires like the heat in the hot red liver of a beast. Out of the fissures of the earth came breaths of other breathing, vapours direct from the living physical underearth, exhalations carrying inspiration. The whole thing was alive, and had a great soul, or anima: and in spite of one great soul, there were myriad roving, lesser souls: every man, every creature and tree and lake and mountain and stream, was animate, had its own peculiar consciousness. And has it today.²³

This integrated perception, and the way of life which it creates, Lawrence could not share with any existing civilisation of his own time. The Etruscan civilisation had retreated into its tombs, yet it alone expressed that 'delicate sensitiveness' and sympathy with the outer world that was to Lawrence a necessity of life today. The only way perhaps he could create the community he wished, was in his art, where through a record of personal response involving an inward participation in all he observed he could stimulate his readers to equal acts of attention, self-realisation and discovery.

II

This study is not primarily concerned with the background, either biographical or historical, of Lawrence's works. The test is primary and in certain cases where possible, the manuscripts.

23. Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places. pp. 146-147.

My analysis of the texts I hope questions and illuminates the following proposals.

The creative process in all verse and prose of Lawrence's is essentially poetic and inquisitive. In the sense that Lawrence's attention is directed towards what the reader recognises in the work as the outer world, it is inquisitive. In the sense that it is also concerned with symbol, allegory, and the imaginative interpretation of events and objects in the outer world it is poetic. This thesis concerns the relationship between the two and attempts to explain the relationship in terms of a process; the first acts as a foundation of and stimulus for the second, and the function of imagination is self-exploration, using the outer world as a gateway into the self.

The process can be found in its simplest form in Lawrence's early poems. But as it develops and the burden of self-exploration is given to the characters, complexities arise. To grasp these complexities the process as found in the poems is therefore best studied chronologically, beginning with the poems. Almost all the poems of the period 1905 to 1911 follow the same pattern. The poem begins with a presentation of the poet's immediate environment, his surroundings, and his response to it, as if he were writing in its presence. Detail follows detail until one or other appears to merit a second glance, a particular one which appears to embody the cause of the persistent inquisitiveness. Though the details belong to the outer world, certain among them are more relevant than others to the interior reality within the poet's mind. This is the final object of the consciousness at work in the poems as it concentrates its attention.

Thus, by their association with his life, by their persistence, recurrence, or even by their strangeness, certain events or objects cast shadows into the poet's mind. The poem is a way of seeking out which object, which events, so that the shadow, of which he has only a vague foreknowledge, may become clearly outlined to him. The poet is then able to apply his discoveries to the more adequate living of his life. This is the final stage in the process or sequence, that of decision.

A text in manuscript allows us to examine what a writer considers at the time of writing ought to be either altered or preserved. Every reason behind changes and additions cannot be known, possibly even by the writer himself. But the areas of difficulty can be observed and defined more closely with each text. The texts chosen plot the course of certain difficulties. One is more likely to find the problems which most seriously engaged Lawrence's artistic intelligence in passages that show his effort to select the appropriate object for concentration and to move then from the outer to the symbolic world, than for instance in his struggle with a formal rhyme scheme or with meter.

I have organised my selection of early poems under three headings. Many of the poems deal with love and friendship, but a large number were written on other topics: the change in personal environment from country to town, from Eastwood to Croydon, from childhood and adolescence to places where workable adult attitudes are required. These form two of the three groups, but the first group contains poems to illustrate initially the symbol-making method of thinking that enabled Lawrence to understand his personal experiences. The poems 'End of Another Home Holiday' and

'The Wild Common' are the first poems to be considered, in both manuscript and published versions. These and others are taken from the manuscript of early poems now in Nottingham University library.²⁴ Though this is the only available manuscript evidence at present, the selection it offers is by no means small or the subject matter limited.

With one or two significant exceptions the subject matter in the poems consistently records occasions of 'perplexity' in the poet's mind. Certain surroundings excite feelings of tension. They may be a London suburb or a school classroom, a girl's face or the nervousness in her bearing, or the place in the countryside near Eastwood as precious hours at home quickly elapse. 'End of Another Home Holiday' deals with the poet's feelings of guilt on leaving home, with the loving anxiety of his mother, but also with the widening circle of his adult experience. The mother is an onlooker who threatens to disrupt her son's natural development into individuality and manhood by appealing to his pity for her loss. The poem begins and ends with the writer's immediate surroundings. In the meantime two clusters of images associated with mother love and natural growth are dramatically opposed. Exposing and exploring the conflict in this way, however, does not resolve it. The mother remains to ask 'yet more', unceasingly. The images of mother-love are derived from the observed surroundings. The houses

24. Manuscript and published versions of 'The Wild Common' can be found in Complete Poems, ed. De Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts. (1972). Ms version of 'End of Another Home Holiday' is available only in ms La 1 2. Nottingham University Library, from which other drafts of poems discussed in this thesis are also taken. Other early poems can be found in the selection from the Clarke notebook, see F. Warren Roberts, 'D.H. Lawrence. The Second "Poetic Me": Some New Material'. Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Vol. XIV (1970). p. 5.

of Eastwood crouch 'pitiful, beseeching, resigned', aspects which apply also to the mother, the 'love' figure. The surroundings suggest the emotion as if it were built into them and thus if carefully described will give the poet an image for his feelings. The attendant emotion, the half-known causes of the perplexity, can be grasped by finding an image with the largest possible emotional charge.

The work of many poets could be described in this way, certain distinguishing features being the areas in which and the method whereby the image is found. In Lawrence's case we have a writer with an unusually profound interest in the external world, and who records the transference from the observing eye to the mind's eye as it happens. The process by which this occurs I refer to throughout as the imaginative process.

One may see in the manuscript how certain details from the surroundings are selected and worked on until the appropriate ones are found. The poet's mind, as in divination, 'picks out certain factors which shall represent the image seen.' Lawrence found a way of describing this process in his last major work Apocalypse which, written soon after Etruscan Places, further illustrates his admiration for the science of augury:

To get at the Apocalypse we have to appreciate the mental workings of the pagan thinker or poet...who starts with an image, sets the image in motion, allows it to achieve a certain course or circuit of its own, and then takes up another image... To appreciate the pagan manner of thought we have to...allow the mind to move in cycles, or to flit here and there over a cluster of images. [The oracles] were not supposed to say something that fitted plainly in the whole chain of circumstance. They were...to deliver a set of images...of the real dynamic value, which should set the emotional consciousness of the enquirer, as he pondered them, revolving more and more rapidly, till out of a state of

intense emotional absorption the resolve at last formed.²⁵

A major proposal will be that this emotional state, a rapid searching for resolution, a building up of impressions into symbols, occupied Lawrence not only as an artistic means but as a cause of perplexity in itself and required a moral commitment he could by no means always allow it. At times in the early poems, but more persistently in Sons and Lovers this sort of analysis and enquiry at work in the minds of certain characters is seen as dangerous, unwholesome and destructive.

The findings of Chapter Two largely determine my choice of evidence for this from the early novels and stories. In these, the imaginative process is carried through not by the writer alone but by specific characters. Surroundings and events resemble those in the poems, and the work of this period is for the most part autobiographical. The imaginative characters are usually female; Lettie in The White Peacock, Louisa in 'The Goose Girl', the two sisters in 'Daughters of the Vicar', and Elizabeth Bates in 'Odour of Chrysanthemums'. Lawrence's rewriting of these two tales in 1913 shows a considerable mastery of the characteristic technique. The sureness with which it is used leads to deeper insight and the appearance of definite themes. In The White Peacock, however, the sense of a theme is suppressed, for Lawrence was reluctant to develop the imaginative process beyond the state of observation.

Lawrence's first novel has been generally regarded by critics as an immature work, but a comparison between the kind of immaturity

25. Apocalypse. pp. 50 - 54.

in the style and that of the characters has not so far been attempted. This is my own contribution, reinforced by instances of imaginative thought being avoided, whether deliberately or unconsciously, by both the novelist and the main protagonists. All the characters who are in any way imaginative seem reluctant to face maturity and the confusions of an adult world. They resist the inevitable changes in their environment, changes which in the poems stimulate imaginative enquiry, but they also resist that enquiry itself. Nostalgia replaces creative imaginative response, self-exploration is resisted with tragic consequences, decisions are postponed until they can no longer usefully be made or are made wrongly. In addition the effort to interpret experience imaginatively is confused with capricious works of art in which reality is distorted. There is a persistent mistrust of the unnatural framework of picture making. The natural world offers no consistent sense of harmony. The characters' anxious responses to nature isolate in one moment its savage qualities, and in another their own nostalgia. Thinking and consciousness, the 'spiritual' aspects of experience are associated with social accomplishment and feelings and intuitions with barbarity, and there is a sense that the real enough conflict lacks resolution because the opposing elements have not been deeply investigated or understood.

In support of this the manuscript alterations to the novel show a prevailing concern to rewrite passages where a character's imaginative response has moved his or her perceptions beyond attention to outside objects and towards a symbolic interpretation

of experience.²⁶ Such scenes obviously proved the most difficult to write and Lawrence's greater confidence in subsequent novels invites the conclusion that he had to learn how to present and evaluate imaginative experience before he could write novels of major significance. In The White Peacock the external world remains external and though it is described with fascinated attention, the novelist's reluctance to develop observation into insight prevented him from giving coherence and cohesiveness to what was observed. The random selection of events and described details confirms this but points, in the light of subsequent development, to a prevailing uncertainty, a reluctance to handle major themes.

In Sons and Lovers the hero himself is an imaginative artist and the novel depicts the history of his development. One major theme of Lawrence's work as a whole now emerges as the value and the potential disruption of imaginative thought itself. This theme is bound up with others to the extent that the story of the novel develops according to the interpretations placed by characters on certain events and actions which assume dramatic importance and stimulate further events. My proposition is that Sons and Lovers can be freshly approached by an analysis of how its familiar symbolism occurs, that is, by the personal meaning that individual characters give to the people and surroundings which confront them. Mrs. Morel is driven to find symbolic meanings in certain events while Morel her husband is not, and this is one way of grasping the division in their marriage. Her image of Morel influences the

26. The only surviving manuscript of The White Peacock is in possession of Mr. George Lazarus, to whom thanks are due for the evidence presented in Chapter Three of this thesis.

course of her marriage but because she sees him partially and not wholly, because she allows her idea of him to prevail above her experience of him, the image she forms is destructive. Paul learns how to think imaginatively from his mother, but he must evaluate it and reform it for himself. Miriam provides an opportunity for such understanding. Her way of thinking confuses him because she lacks desire for physical contact not only with him sexually but with the outer world also, preferring in more ways than one to shut herself away. She resists the daily domestic activity that figures so prominently in Mrs. Morel's experience and which provides the 'spark of contact' from which imaginative thought proceeds. Paul's history enabled Lawrence to understand the need for a balance between the 'spiritual' and 'unspiritual' forms of experience that could produce, in living as well as in artistic activity, the long sought-for integration.

In The Rainbow and Women in Love Lawrence began to explore not only the emotions he thought of as personal to himself but those that were representative of the civilisation to which he belonged. He shared its failure and struggle for integration, a path that brought him into contact with other civilisations, though each one reflected the ambivalence and oppositions within him which the search itself made necessary.

Throughout his life and work Lawrence was continually expressing a vital alertness to the aura of the phenomenal world, penetrating, even altering his consciousness. It is not enough to say that he was able to justify this alertness with a style which communicated his enthusiasm, and often his abhorrence, with peculiar freedom and freshness. His mature style conveys how masterfully he

understood the delicacy of words as well as their power. But the alertness he conveyed he also advocated. It added proportion to his ritual devaluation of the habits of thought he found among his contemporaries. He rarely if ever concerned himself with the pictorial or decorative qualities of a country or its people, and only in so far as they were illuminated by personal contact was he able to give substance to his perceptions. He quickly sought the inner energy of a place or an object, its impingement and consequences in life, its relationship with other individual forms, until a complete landscape was built up, of conflicting forces that could be seen conflicting. His relationship with the outer world was such that even his desire to superimpose his personal psychic disposition onto what he saw or onto the places he visited became itself but one force in conflict with others. A two-way process was necessary, and in his early poetic practice lay the seeds of what he eventually found.

I

'End of Another Home Holiday' and 'The Wild Common' are among the best of Lawrence's poems. They also serve as introductions to his early poetic style and to recurrent themes in the poems written between 1908 and 1911. During that time Lawrence produced in the region of fifty titled pieces, many fragments, and also worked continuously on The White Peacock. As with several episodes in the novel the poems and fragments frequently deal with incidents which actually took place. Jessie Chambers records how encounters and conversations would often reappear as pieces of prose or verse, and yet the number of fully developed poems is small by comparison with those that appear to be simple unelaborated observation or experiment.¹ By definition, a fully developed poem is one in which the imaginative process has extended what would be otherwise a slight description to a complete exploration, and which occurs as the result of a direct response directly reported. There are many examples of how, through too mannered or traditional an approach, directness fails, but the above poems will serve as good examples of successful exploration.

Lawrence began writing as early as 1905. A Personal Record testifies that about this time he and Jessie Chambers began to suffer

1. E.T. (Jessie Chambers Wood). D.H. Lawrence: A Personal Record. (1935). p. 104. 'What fascinated me about his writing was the way he would weave incidents from our daily life into it.'

from certain outside influences on their relationship.² Though a delight to them, their friendship lacked definition, and Lawrence was forced to see it as the world would see it and to contend with his mother's disapproval. He began writing at a time of self-questioning and doubt. His later comment on these early attempts as being something more than literary exercises is helpful and appropriate:

From the first, I was a little afraid of my real poems - not my 'compositions', but the poems that had the ghost in them. They seemed to me to come from somewhere, I didn't quite know where, out of a me whom I didn't know and didn't want to know, and to say things I would much rather not have said: for choice. But there they were. I never read them again. Only I gave them to Miriam, and she loved them, or she seemed to. So when I was twenty-one, and went to Nottingham University as a day student, I began putting them down in a little college notebook, which was the foundation of the poetic me.³

Whether 'End of Another Home Holiday' was first composed at this time or put down afterwards can be ascertained only from its subject matter. Lawrence left the Midlands for Croydon in 1908 and the poem would appear to have been written partly as a result.⁴ As can be seen from the manuscript Lawrence clearly worked on the poem in this notebook, which shows several attempts to develop the poem beyond initial observation. The first attempt proved to Lawrence that he was dealing with far more than a mere fragment and at a

2. Jessie Chambers records conflict during Lawrence's 21st year when he was a student at Nottingham College, and 'was writing poems in a small thick notebook with the college arms on the cover.' E.T. (Jessie Chambers Wood). D.H. Lawrence: A Personal Record. (1935). p. 104.
3. Foreword to Collected Poems. 12 May 1928. See Complete Poems. (1972). p. 849.
4. E.T. A Personal Record. p. 149. 'His going away (to Croydon) would leave (his mother's) days empty and colourless.'

second attempt he reworked what he had already written in order to continue the poem beyond where he left off. At a third attempt he succeeded and the third and final draft resembles in all significant respects the poem as published in Love Poems in 1913.

The first of the three attempts begins with an observation of the surroundings that is also a question about them. The effort to describe what is heard, smelt and observed, combines with an equal urgency to answer the questions and so unveil the anxiety:

When shall I see the half-moon sink again
Behind the black sycamore at the end of the garden
When will the scent of the dim, white phlox
Creep up the wall to me, and in at my open window.

- 5 Why is it the long, slow stroke of the midnight bell
(Will it never finish the twelve!)
Falls again and again on my heart with a heavy reproach!
The moon mist is over the village, the bell speaks
out of the mist.
And all the little roofs of the village bow low,
pitiful, beseeching, resigned.
- 10 What have I done to you, my home!

Little home, suddenly, I love you
As I hear the sharp clean trot of the pony down the road
Succeeding sharp little sounds dropping into the silence
Clear upon the long drawn hearseness of a train across
the valley.⁵

Lawrence wrote the word 'unfinished' at the end of this passage, and must have recognised that he had made a strong and effective beginning. The combination of question and observation is no mere rhetorical trick. It recurs frequently in later novels and handled in mature prose reveals moments of crisis and

5. Nottingham University Library. Ms La 12. For final published version of 'End of Another Home Holiday' see Complete Poems. pp. 62-64.

perplexity.⁶ The writer in this case is searching out the directing impulses of his own hidden life, and searching moreover among the immediate prospects of his surroundings, as if they had been charged, as indeed they have, with the emotion of predominant importance to him at that moment. If he is to grasp the emotion he must allow himself to concentrate on those details that carry the charge at highest density. With sudden clarity, the sharp, clean trot, of the pony exposes one part of the emotion. But the love for home which it brings to light remains as one part only and lacks the anxiety previously experienced through other and therefore more relevant details. Escaping from these he experiences momentary relief, but must force himself, if he is to unearth the emotion in full complexity, to receive more ominous impressions. A further sense of relief found in the detail with which the first attempt concludes points ironically to the centre of the conflict:

15 The light has gone out at last from under my mother's
dōōr.

That she should love me so.
She, so lonely, greying now,
It breaks my heart!

6. For one among many examples see The Rainbow p. 129:
'What was missing in his [Tom Brangwen's] life, that, in his ravening soul, he was not satisfied? He had had that friend at school, his mother, his wife, and Anna? What had he done? He had failed with his friend, he had been a poor son; but he had known satisfaction with his wife, let it be enough; he loathed himself for the state he was in over Anna... Was his life nothing? Had he nothing to show, no work? What had he known, but the long, marital embrace with his wife! Curious, that this was what his life amounted to!' The crisis and perplexity in this case surrounds Tom's reaction to Anna's engagement to Will Brangwen.

- Love is the great Asker.
- 20 The sun and the rain do not ask the secret
Of the time when the grain struggles down in the dark
The moon walks her lonely way without anguish
Because no loved one sorrows over her departure
And the great live thing that plays along the wind
- 25 Tossing the cars along the streets, chiding with angry
blue fire
- It lives forever unquestioned.⁷

The relief in 'at last' was omitted from the final draft, but it shows up how closely the writing follows upon the feeling, as the central detail of the mother appears, the light gone out and her influence suddenly relaxed.

On being alert to this detail, Lawrence's attention immediately shifts from the observing to the mind's eye. Even at the first attempt, with the sun and the rain and the struggling grain, a circuit of unforeseen images has begun to dictate its own course, and a further reality than that of the immediately visible world has been located. The outer world - the light under the door - has been used as a jumping off point into images of interior relevance animated by the previously hidden anxiety. These images serve to qualify the writer's love for home and his mother by contrasting it with an opposite set of values and needs. But lines 24 to 26 fail to follow through from what has already been achieved, and are later discarded. By introducing the London streets, possibly since he associated these with his new life separate from home, Lawrence had moved too far away from the immediate, original location, the view from the upstairs window. The first attempt collapses at this point and at the second Lawrence returns to rework his description of the original home landscape, recognising perhaps the need

7. Ms. Lal 2.

for a circuit of images equal to the others in strength but containing the essential and opposite attraction that he suffers so much regret and self-reproach to have to acknowledge and abandon:

When shall I see the half moon sink again
Behind the black sycamore at the end of the garden
When will the scent of the dim white phlox
Creep tenderly up cool with a wisk kiss of pardon

- 5 Why should the stroke of the midnight bell
(Will it never finish the hour?)
Fall again and again on my heart with a heavy reproach
Belying the flower?

- The moon-mist is over the village, out of the mist speaks
the bell
10 And all the little houses bow low, pitiful, beseeching,
resigned.
(Oh, little home, what is it you have to tell?)

- The trot of a hastening pony, sharply defined
~~Drops across~~ the long-drawn hoarseness of
Falls cleanly on a train across the valley.
(Ah, little home, ~~is it that you would twine~~
would you twine
15 Yourself round my heart; ~~but~~ I have not the heart to dally?)
when

- At last the light has gone out from under my mother's door:
I can lean me down on the window-sill
And beg the mist-strewn night to be still
Not to plead with me, not to implore
20 But to yield me helpless will.⁸

Less successful than the first attempt, the above passage illustrates the confusion produced by divided and incompatible intentions.

Lawrence appears to be giving one part of his attention to description, but he is also trying with premature urgency to force the observed details to act out the dramatic conflict the first attempt had unearthed. The white phlox is made to 'creep tenderly up' and to pardon him, while the midnight bell 'belying the flower' persists reproachfully in the distance. Similarly, 'home' is

forcibly and clumsily seen twining itself round the heart. To reveal tension in landscape as an objective equivalent for emotional anxiety calls for extreme subtlety of style as well as for acute regard for visual effects. Without this the visual and the symbolic impulses confront and destroy each other. The change from one to the other has to be so natural and smooth as to be practically invisible, and cannot be achieved here without an open surrender to one impulse at a time. Furthermore Lawrence burdens himself with formal rhymes that again distract from the natural flow of the verse. 'Helpless will' is indeed required if the natural flow is to be allowed to explore the inherent emotion in the poet's response to his surroundings.

Throughout the second attempt, only those details of greatest significance to the emotion remain unchanged. The final draft preserves the first attempt largely unaltered except for the omission of lines 24 to 26, and the third attempt below takes up those aspects of the scene outside the window that remind the poet most strongly of his mother. Her aura pervades the crouching landscape, and Lawrence selects its 'beseeching, pitiful' qualities to make a comparison with the personification of Love already suggested by 'Love is the great Asker'. He is thus able to fill out the image to a full active role in the drama of conflict, so that this image, like that of the struggling grain and of uninterrupted growth achieves a similar 'course or circuit of its own'.

It is doubtful whether the achievement of the two image circuits that alternate during the latter half of the poem constitute Lawrence's conscious intention. Whether or not, he appears to have worked instinctively towards them, and even in the failed second

attempt had tried to order the landscape to suit his purpose. In the following stanzas he reveals a strong attraction for growth and purpose that work themselves out unconsciously but organically, words that can be critically applied to the images, as well as to what they describe. In the notebook they appear to have been developed almost entirely without alterations and represent one of Lawrence's earliest uses of the 'image thinking' which he later described in Apocalypse.⁹

Forever, forever by my shoulder pitiful Love will linger
Crouching as the little houses crouch under the mist when
I turn.

Forever the church ~~lifts~~ from the mist lifts up the
reproachful finger
Pointing my eyes in wretched defiance where Love hides her
face to mourn.

cheerful

- 25 Oh but the rain creeps down towards the grain
That struggles alone in the dark
And asking nothing, cheerfully steals back again.
The moon sets forth o' nights
To walk the dusky, lonely heights
30 Serenely, with steps unswerving;
Pursued by no sigh of bereavement
No thought of the tears of love, unnerving
Her constant tread: -

- 35 While ever at my side
Frail and sad, with grey bowed head
The beggar-woman, the yearning eyed
Inexorable love goes lagging.

- The wild young heifer glancing distraught
With a strange new knocking of life at her side
40 Runs seeking a loneliness:
The little grain draws down the earth to hide
Nay, even the slumberous egg, as it labors under the shell
Patiently to divide, and self-divide
Asks to be hidden, and wishes nothing to tell.

But when I draw the seamy cloak of silence over my eyes
Piteous Love comes peeping under the hood
Touches the clasp with trembling fingers, and tries
To put her ear to the painful sob of my blood,

9. Apocalypse p. 54. See also Introduction, note 25.

While her tears soak through to my breast
Where they burn and cauterise.¹⁰

Together, each circuit of images reveal in tableau form a direct confrontation between mother and son. But the fullness of the images allows more than one interpretation of their meaning. Nevertheless they bear out Lawrence's approach to experience in this poem as an exploratory one, for the hidden anxiety has now been exposed at a point where he can watch the conflicting forces within the original emotion pursuing their separate aims. A sense of hopeless pain is preserved, for the poet cannot lose sympathy for either, and the image of the cloak, created to explain the mother-figure, now embraces Lawrence's own activities, hidden as they are. His 'seemly cloak of silence' proves ineffectual against tears that 'burn and cauterise': his mother's inquisitiveness and his own self-concealment, are served by the one image of the cloak, even though they are dramatically separated and working against each other. Lawrence is attracted to the idea of self-concealment in a poem whose overall process of development depends upon anything but that. His only final solution is to be able to stage the drama in significant images.

Though omitted from the notebook, the final draft, in which the most successful passages from the three attempts above were joined together, cannot have been made long after the third attempt was finished. A holograph manuscript was given to Louie Burrows in 1909 showing the poem's complete form.¹¹ Lawrence preserved the passage in which the mother and her loneliness (lines 15 to 17)

10. Ms. Lal 2.

11. This ms. is now in the care of Nottingham University Library.

developed into 'Love is the great Asker'. The window-sill passage (lines 17 to 20 of the second attempt) is discarded as is the London street passage of the first. The images of the third attempt do not cease to be descriptive but the observations now simply help to clarify the imagined drama: the sky 'dusky, lonely' the moon 'without anguish .. unswerving ... constant'. The final draft as published in the Collected Poems contains some alterations of these epithets. They are less essential to the poem than the exploratory observations of the first attempt, but in these revisions Lawrence reveals his attitude to the dramatic situation he has visualised. 'Cheerfully' in line 27 becomes the more tentative, less preferential, 'patiently', and 'seamly' line 44 is altered to 'scanty'. As a figure in the tableau himself 'scanty' emphasises his vulnerability and his likeness to the begging figure of love while 'silence' associates him with the hidden grain. The change stresses his dual sympathy and divided loyalty.

These alterations occur most frequently in the final stanza of the poem, not yet quoted, composed during the third attempt:

65 The moon lies back and reddens,
 In the valley a corncrake calls
 Monotonously,
 With a piteous, unalterable plaint that deadens
 My patient activity
 With a hoarse, insistent request, that falls
 Unweariedly
 Asking, asking
 ~~My hurt breast tasking~~
 Hurting my breast
 Deepening the bruise of my misery. (N.U. msLa12.)

The moon lies back and reddens.
 In the valley a corncrake calls
 Monotonously,
 With a plaintive, unalterable voice, that deadens

My confident activity;
With a hoarse, insistent request that falls
Unweariedly, unweariedly,
Asking something more of me,
Yet more of me.

(Love Poems & Collected Poems
1928)

In context the change of 'patient' (line 56) to 'confident' creates a slight shift of meaning. 'Confident' ironically adjacent to 'deadens' suggests hopelessness and the same hopelessness is reinforced by the corncrake's cry from the landscape, the voice of the surroundings returning now at the end with the same 'piteous' demands. Though in attending to them, Lawrence has exposed his emotion, he cannot alter the conditions wherein that emotion was founded. Though it can be understood, it cannot be dispelled. Hemmed in, unable to escape, he continues to respond as at the beginning, though now the questions have been answered. The return to the original surroundings is in itself ironic, stressing the hopelessness, and pointing a clear meaning in the otherwise vague word 'activity'. The activity in this case may be no less than a form of self-exploration, the writing of the poem which is the bringing to light of hidden emotion.

A. Alvarez has noted that the mother figure in the poem opposes the images of natural growth that suggest the animal urge, hidden from the mother, of sexuality in the young man.¹² It is true that these images have more than sufficient resonance to allow Alvarez' interpretation, but to emphasise it excludes others, and at a deep

12. A study of 'End of Another Home Holiday' can be found in A. Alvarez, The Shaping Spirit. (1958). pp. 144-151.

level the mother resists self-exploration as much as she resists her son's sexual independence. Sexuality and self-awareness are both marks of individuation shameful to puritan feeling, and Lawrence's later remarks in the Preface to the Collected Poems are not insignificant:

I remember subsequent half-furtive moments when I would absorbedly scribble at verse for an hour or so, and then run away from the act and the production as if it were secret sin. It seems to me that 'knowing oneself' was a sin and a vice for innumerable centuries, before it became a virtue.¹³

The writer of 'End of Another Home Holiday' was not certain enough nor far enough removed from his childhood and traditional influences to be able to agree. The poem was written out of the many uncertainties and divisions that attended the growth towards aesthetic, moral, and sexual independence.

In addition, the method and the theme of the poem are linked. The augur's selection of certain aspects of the outer world according to their reflection and meaning in his own heart, and the development of these aspects into symbols, makes 'End of Another Home Holiday' a perfect instance of what Lawrence came to understand by the word 'divination'. But in 1909, the gift of imagination bore no clear instruction or moral certainty for its possessor, and before these could be acquired it had to be accommodated, often aggravating in the process problems it alone could solve only by a feat of strength.

If in 'End of Another Home Holiday' the nature images answer a need for an alternative world to the actual surroundings, in

13. Foreword to Collected Poems. Complete Poems (1972).
p. 849.

'The Wild Common' the reverse is true. No alternative is needed where harmony already exists, as it exists here, in the spontaneous exuberance of the living creatures, and of the poet in harmony with the world of nature. Yet the events of the poem suggest that such harmony needs to be threatened before it can be fully appreciated.

In 1928 Lawrence wrote of the poem:

The Wild Common was very early and very confused. I have re-written some of it, and added some, till it seems complete. It has taken me twenty years to say what I started to say, incoherently, when I was nineteen, in this poem.¹⁴

Despite this confession, 'The Wild Common' has aroused little critical interest. Nevertheless, Lawrence appears to have spent much effort in the revision for so small and early a poem and the notebook also shows that in 1904 and 1905 a good deal of trouble had been taken. This is surprising in what would seem to be a simple poem about a boy's delight in nature. A nature poem one might think would make few demands on Lawrence, but its real subjects emerged as being the sense of separation from nature, the passage of time, and the destructive presence of self-consciousness.

This presence appears when the boy, otherwise lost in joy among the bright atmosphere of the common, suddenly catches sight of his white reflection in the water, and quite unaccountably lapses into thought. He imagines the brilliant gorse flowers faded, the marigolds diseased, and himself and the moment of joy vanished forever. But the poem opens in celebration, and the three stanzas below, taken from Amores, in which the poem first appeared, describe the life of nature as a fountain of formations and resemblances. Each

14. Complete Poems. (1972). p. 850.

2/
Into a deep pond, an old sheep dip,
Dark, overgrown with willows, cool, with the brook ebbing
through so slow,
Naked on the steep, soft lip
Of the bank I stand watching my own white shadow
quivering to and fro.

2/
Restless it wakes as if it would leave me,
Then, quick slips back to my feet, as my fond
and fluctuant soul
After pretending twere good to bereave me
And wander spirit-free, cleaves to my flesh as
shaken wine clings in its bowl.

Were/
When gorse flowers shrivel their gold is lost
And without the pulsing waters where the
marigolds and the songs of the brook?
If my veins and my breast with love embossed
Withered, my insolent soul would be lost as the
~~flowers' gold~~ which the hot wind took.
flower-gold

So my soul like a passionate woman turns
Filled with remorseful terror, to the man she scorned,
and her love
For myself in my eye's laughter burns
Ecstatic over the pliant folds rippling down to my
belly from the breast-lights above. 17

The second stanza was omitted from Amores but Lawrence was sufficiently satisfied with the others to publish them with only slight alterations in 1916. This difficulty, in the omitted stanza, shows that Lawrence feels he is on to something important, if he can only express it fully and not succumb, as in the second attempt of 'End of Another Home Holiday', to tortuously symbolic visual effects. Unfortunately, despite an initial celebration of the surroundings, Lawrence's imagination is still unsatisfied. It becomes stimulated by the shadow on the water, and begins to turn towards objects and people that are, strangely, not present and immediate. The bowl of wine, the passionate woman, and the curious love-embossed breast bear no resemblance or intimation of the previous world of nature

which excited such delight, and yet they are posed as elements of positive compensation. The boy's shadow appears to have robbed the outer world of its once numinous power, which these are expected to replace.

One explanation might be that since the boy's 'soul' is no longer dispersed among the flowers and trees but compressed within the shadow, in reaction he turns to images which, though no longer present as the flowers were, nevertheless give stress to flesh, substance, and physical existence as opposed to shadow. Had his intention been to celebrate the beauty, the immediacy of actual, tangible things, this is, by introducing objects of fantasy, the very intention that he defeats. The poem in Amores ends with a renewed exclamation of joy in physical existence, and triumph of the body over the imagining soul, but the changes from natural harmony to self-awareness, and from there to the celebration of selfhood are uncertainly handled, as if Lawrence had not worked out in his poem an understanding of harmony and of self-awareness in a way which would allow them properly to co-exist.

In the stanza omitted from Amores the boy's fluctuant soul resembles the imagination itself. It too moves instinctively from the given surroundings to images of 'dynamic value' and by concentration hopes to find 'an answer to the perplexity'.¹⁸ Its return to 'flesh' as 'shaken wine clings to a bowl' enacts Lawrence's wishes dramatically and imaginatively, but not in fact, for with these images he is no longer describing the original experience on

18. 'dynamic value' Apocalypse. p. 50. 'an answer to the perplexity' Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places. p /53.

the common. He can only complete the poem satisfactorily by returning to this experience and is able to do this in the final version of 1928 by emphasising special qualities in the animals and flowers which the boy shares with them. The boy has suddenly become self-conscious, and the final version emphasises the self-consciousness and delight in consciousness of all the creatures of the wild common.

By an intriguing about-turn, what isolated the boy from nature now fixes him within it. In the final version Lawrence qualifies the harmony in nature as one allowing the boy to participate once more. The peewit cries 'I am here, I am here!' consciously affirming the delighted knowledge of its own presence in the flesh:

But how splendid it is to be substance, here!
My shadow is neither here nor there; but I, I am royally
here!
I am here! I am here! screams the peewit; the may-blobs
burst out in a laugh as they hear!
Here! flick the rabbits. Here! pants the gorse. Here!
say the insects far and near.¹⁹

Before the affirmation could be strong in each stanza the shadow had to be dealt with and the previous clumsiness suppressed. Like the Ameres version the final version again leaves out the stanza where 'shaken wine clings to the bowl'. The 'passionate woman' is also kept out and the water itself, enfolding and touching the reflection, now plays the part previously allotted to her. Both these improvements omit images that distract attention from the immediate surroundings. To depict the boy's response to the shadow Lawrence then found an entirely new image. The image of the boy with a 'white dog' lacks the anxiety that previously undermined

19. Collected Poems. (1928). Complete Poems. p. 34.

what earlier images intended to affirm, and while not suppressing self-consciousness entirely, the new image maintains the lightheartedness and eager energy originally present. The tone now suggests that self-awareness could not possibly disrupt the previous experience and must therefore somehow be included in it. The shadow stanzas were thus altered to the following:

What if the gorse-flowers shrivelled, and I were gone?
What if the waters ceased, where were the marigolds then,
and the gudgeon?
What is this thing that I look down upon?
White on the water wimples my shadow, strains like a dog
on a string, to run on.

How it looks back, like a white dog to its master!
I on the bank all substance, my shadow all shadow looking
up to me, looking back!
And the water runs, runs faster, runs faster,
And the white dog dances and quivers, I am holding his
cord quite slack.²⁰

In all previous versions the boy's identification with his shadow had led him into abstract speculation about his 'soul'. But now the boy 'all substance' and the shadow 'all shadow' are kept entirely apart. The shadow's suggestion of self-awareness has been reduced to a distinctly subordinate position. The boy treats it with good natured superiority and is its undoubted master. No longer afraid he regards it almost carelessly, almost relaxing the control earlier stanzas had fought to maintain.

The second half of the poem in Collected Poems now echoes the unchanged opening stanzas which were written before Amores. We remember how there in the poem's third stanza:

20. Collected Poems. (1928). Complete Poems. p.33-4.

The common flaunts bravely; but below, from the rushes
Crowds of glittering king-cups surge to challenge the
blossoming bushes;²¹

If this had been harmony it is a harmony that includes self-assertion. It is not unison but the energy of riot and challenge. To be conscious of oneself in the flesh, and of the flux of the contingent universe, was accepted in 1928 as the actual cause for the exclamation of joy, and not as in the earlier versions as a tragic awareness which had to be compensated for or tortuously rejected.

To ask what had been gained or lost by this striking change we may set the exuberant last stanza of the 1928 version against a comment on Lawrence's thought by Graham Hough:

Sun, but in substance, yellow water-blobs!
Wings and feathers on the crying, mysterious ages, peewits
wheeling!
All that is right, all that is good, all that is God
takes substance! a rabbit lobs
In confirmation, I hear sevenfold lark-songs pealing.

This I believe points to the most serious limitation of Lawrence's thought. To be alive in the flesh is magnificent, and Lawrence has expressed... it magnificently. But if it is the only supreme value, man is irrevocably immersed in the transitory and the contingent, irremediably at the mercy of physical accident and physical change. And however much Lawrence may hate fixity and achieve a poetic and metaphysical exaltation by glorifying the flux, man is also a being who has a passion for the absolute, the changeless, the unconditioned. This predicament is a tragic one, perhaps the root of all tragedy. Yet Lawrence fails or refuses to see it in a tragic light.

Man is in love, and loves what vanishes,
What more is there to say?

Yeats' stoic question, for all its laconic brevity, contains the essence of this tragedy as nothing in Lawrence does.²²

21. Amores. Complete Poems. p. 33.

22. Graham Hough, The Dark Sun, a study of D.H. Lawrence. (1956). p. 258.

The relevance of Yeats' couplet to the troublesome shadow stanzas of 'The Wild Common' is remarkable. That Lawrence's first attempts at the poem were a stylistic failure is beyond doubt, but did he only achieve success late by avoiding the problem? In all versions he struggled to deny the tragic overtone by acknowledging the violability of the self in terms not of tragedy but affirmation. In these new terms the same evidence is heard and recognised, but the ensuing judgement is not one of damnation but of ultimate redemption. By 1928 he could make a more confident statement of those terms. Contingency and relationship are paramount in his thought, essential to the true workings of his imagination. Like the Etruscan priests he responded to the surrounding world as if it were both part of and other than the self. Without both neither could be explored or celebrated.

II

In few early poems of this period did Lawrence attempt anything so complex as 'The Wild Common'. Many pieces in the notebook are in fact jottings or notes. Many deal with the contrasting life of city and country. There are some monologues in which the thoughts of imaginary characters are presented. But all are constructed around simple observations of the outer world that reveal an attendant emotion. Most frequently the emotion is either love, pity or fear. But always, in these poem-fragments, Lawrence appears fascinated by new life, feeling and experience.²³

23. Lawrence's early poetic style would be as well represented by the Clarke notebook as by La L 2 although it contains slightly later pieces than 'the foundation of the poetic me.'

On leaving Eastwood for Croydon Lawrence found much to explore, and experienced many new features of life. These are sometimes treated with dread, as in the poems about school. Sometimes Lawrence felt enriched by the changes, and could describe events in London, such as the Scots Guards on parade, with considerable enthusiasm. But among the most impressive features of these poems remain the minute attention to detail, and a willingness to explore. As one example, the following passage appears in the fragment 'Brotherhood'. The description of the curled hand of a sleeping female beggar under Waterloo Bridge leaves no doubt that this was an actual experience:

Her curled hand slips from her bosom, asleep.
 In the darkness, my fingers, with a little qualm
 Feel for it, softly touch it, and creep
 Over the mound of her thumb, to the warm
 Soft sleeping hollow palm. 24

A few of the fragments indulge a strong sense of nostalgia for the country around Eastwood and for the security of childhood or the glamour of adolescence. The most successful of these, such as the famous 'Piano' are complemented by poems about adult life, about living and teaching in London. In May and June of 1912 Lawrence published a sequence of poems under the heading 'The Schoolmaster.' 25

24. Ms. La 1 2.

25. 'The Schoolmaster'. First Published May - June 1912, in the Saturday Westminster Gazette. Reprinted with some alterations in Love Poems and Others (1912).

He wrote more poems on this theme than were included in the sequence: in fact he appears for a short time to have been obsessed by the subject. The real fruit of this obsession did not emerge until The Rainbow when Ursula's experience constitutes one of Lawrence's finest achievements in prose. The poems are worth attention not only for this reason but because they offered an important challenge to his poetic technique.

That technique, as seen in 'End of Another Home Holiday' involved an 'act of attention' to those objects and scenes in the outside world that aroused strong emotion in the observer. By careful description certain aspects of the seen world would stand forth as images concentrating the emotion so that it would eventually become known. This imaginative process of selection and image-making required time and patience to complete effectively. The poems about schoolteaching deal with an experience full of perplexing conflicts. Generally, the poems are of three kinds. The first kind speak of strife, chaos and uproar, and of Lawrence desperately trying to keep his mind on what he has to do and of not having time to think out what his reaction should be or what sort of experience this might be. The second deals with a situation such as that in 'Last Lesson of the Afternoon' where the struggle is willingly given up, and the third with rare moments of peace and harmony where he not only has time to consider the experience of being a teacher but comes to the conclusion that it is not so bad after all. Lawrence refused to treat the fact of not having time to think as one of teaching's rare ironic advantages. Even in the worst moments he remained unhappily aware:

-How can I endure the challenging deeps of so many eyes!

The thick snow is crumpled on the roof, it plunges down
Awfully. Must I call back those hundred eyes ?

A voice

Wakes from the hum, answering, faltering about an ab-
stract noun -

All wrong: must I cross this wide space of silence from
emotion

I have startled a hundred eyes. How shall I look
An answer back to a hundred questioning stars ?

Like a scared bird in a room full of people he envies the
silent world outside:

Out of the... sky the wavering snow is shook
Through the yellow spaces between the schools
sweeps one black rock.

The great snowball in the playground stands frozen and still
With snow coming softly down on it - if I could but escape
These hundred disquieting eyes, to be alone with my soul
until

I had travelled this immeasurable space which crowds over
my will. 26

To recover the complete experience he must include every
disconnected impression, as his interest in the black rock and
the snowball indicates. Collecting all that affects him as it
happens, he searches for the underlying unities in a situation
seemingly composed of discordant elements. Nevertheless, the
details of 'A snowy day in school' do arrange themselves into
clear contrasts, the noisy interior of the classroom and the sil-
ent exterior of the natural world. As the poet prefers the world
of nature, so, often, in the school poems about adverse situations,
the imagery of nature is used to give shape to, and so mollify, an
unpleasant predicament:

26. Ms La L 2; a similar version also appears in Love
Poems. Complete Poems, p. 918.

The hum and whisper of the class, like a little wind
From the surf, has arisen: the boys are muttering
The psalms, and furtively from among the texts
Forbidden things and thoughts come fluttering.

Now I am on the strand of a turbulent sea,
A tossing sea of turbulent strife, where now
I stand reluctant to enter, to dream no more, but to bow
Myself and gather the waters beneath me, and lose
Myself in the roar of life, which shall take and obliterate
me.²⁷

Adversity and diversity invite the poet to examine just where he stands in relation to the experience, what his attitude to it is, and what he must do.

In 'Last Lesson of the Afternoon' he realises the comic futility of wasting himself for nothing:

I will not waste my soul and my strength for this.
What do I care for all that they do amiss!
What is the point of this teaching of mine, and of this
Learning of theirs? It all goes down the same abyss.

What does it matter to me, if they can write
A description of a dog, or if they can't?
What is the point? To us both, it is all my aunt!
And yet I'm supposed to care, with all my might.

I do not, and will not; they won't and they don't;
and that's all!
I shall keep my strength for myself; they can keep
theirs as well.
Why should we beat our heads against the wall
of each other? I shall sit and wait for the bell.²⁸

This swift monologue typifies the school poems and the technique of the early poems on two points. First, the stance taken is an exploratory one, a search to render feeling with accuracy and thereby to possess it. It resembles Ursula's experience in The Rainbow in

27. Westminster Gazette. Complete Poems.
pp. 911-912.

28. Collected Poems, 1928. Complete Poems. pp. 74-75.

being the language of audible emotions. Second, and what makes the style particularly Lawrentian, is that the thought has been verbalised as if in the presence of the objects and scenes that give rise to it. It is emotion recollected not in tranquility, in fact in the school poems with one or two exceptions nothing could be further from the case, but in the white heat of the experience itself, in all its baffling immediacy.

The only times Lawrence appeared to have enjoyed being a teacher are those of complete harmony with his pupils. In 'The Best of School' he explains that harmony as moments when the class atmosphere far from disrupting the work of self-exploration actually reinforces it:

And I lift my head upon the troubled tangled world, and
though the pain
Of living my life were doubled, I still have this to
comfort and sustain,
I have such swarming sense of lives at the base of me,
such sense of lives
Clustering upon me, reaching up, as each after the other
strives
To follow my life aloft to the fine wild air of life and
the storm of thought...²⁹

Readers acquainted with 'End of Another Home Holiday' will inevitably feel personally informed of what Lawrence meant by 'the pain of living my life'. To report it personally by instantaneous investigation had been his quest. Auden's complaint of embarrassment in reading what amounted to something more than a very personal diary in the early poems is not insignificant.³⁰ The stylistic

29. 'The Best of School', The Westminster Gazette, 25 May and 1 June 1912. A shortened version appears in Collected Poems, 1928-1972. Also see Complete Poems. p. 917.

30. W.H. Auden. The Dyer's Hand. p. 288.

clumsiness removed, Lawrence's method of character analysis in the mature novels resembles these first miniature explorations of his own personality and experience. But not only had he to learn how to evaluate imaginative response, but also how to transfer the burden of self-exploration onto his characters. The simultaneous achievement of these aims, during and after the writing of Sons and Lovers, amounted to a radical development in his art and thought. In these early poems of which manuscript evidence exists Lawrence can be found carefully improving the technique upon which the later development was founded.

III

Though in many ways a diffuse and unsatisfactory poetic experiment, Lawrence's longest school poem 'Dreams Old and Nascent', does contain much of importance in detecting how far and in what ways he was aware of the kind of poetry he was writing. The poem helps him to understand the means and needs his poetic impulse required in order to find expression. The manuscript evidence and the number of published versions convey this struggle for understanding and provide an opportunity to study it at close quarters.

Two separate drafts of the poem can be found in the notebook, of which the first was headed 'A Still Afternoon in School'.³¹ A shortened modification of the second was published as 'Dreams Old and Nascent' in 1909. This was followed by the Amores version containing a last stanza drafted in the notebook but excluded from The English Review. Many more changes and omissions were made before the final version appeared in the Collected Poems of 1928.

Because of the density of alterations from version to version a brief summary of the course of the poem will help to clarify its consistent direction of thought.³² One relatively quiet afternoon in school Lawrence opens the window and warms his hands on the sunlit stone. He looks across outer London to Norwood Hill, the location of David Copperfield and beyond to the Crystal Palace.³¹ Aware of the boys reading Lorna Doone, and of Norwood and the Palace, the atmosphere of the previous century envelops him. The childlike marriage of David and Dora, the memories of Lawrence's own childhood, once significant to him and undistanced by time, and once the voice of the age, are now merely part of history. Even so, they remain a powerful source of fascination. As in 'Piano' Lawrence's attention to the object or objects he observes in the present is almost swept away by the forces of nostalgia.³² Eventually in 'Dreams Old and Nascent' these forces are resisted and Lawrence searches instead for the objects, events and scenes which constitute the unique aura of the present, those which future ages will recognise as the living forces of Lawrence's own lifetime. In taking a backward look at his experience of the present, Lawrence finally values his own explorations as evidence of the incipient future. He prefers a sense of flux and of self-discovery to the consummated achievements of the past, and therefore concentrates finally on the 'fluent **active** figures of men' working on the railway, and on the boys seeking knowledge from their books and from himself. He seeks

31. E.T. A Personal Record, p. 95. 'Scott was succeeded in our affections by Dickens, with David Copperfield preeminent'.

32. The Clarke notebook contains a fair copy of the version published in 1909.



in effect the manifestation in the physical world of his own poetic impulses, and the poem ends in praise of self-expression, fortified by the need to respond imaginatively to those special aspects of the outer world that reveal not time past but time present, active, and immediate.

The process by which the experiences are recorded and clarified resembles that in 'End of Another Home Holiday'. Lawrence begins with his surroundings and in his description of them extracts those qualities relevant to the emotion they stimulate. The significant quality in this case is that the surroundings appear to have lost their threat and challenge. The unruly pupils have settled to their reading and the discordant sounds of present reality seem to be 'striking far off'. The surroundings are abundant with feelings of remoteness: the bodiless sunlight that 'soaks in the stone', the palace which resembles an abstract energy more than a solid actuality:

I have opened the window to warm my hands on the sill
Where the sunshine soaks in the stone. The afternoon
Is full of dreams, my love, the boys are adream, all still
In a wishful dream of Lorna Doone.

The clink of the shunting engines is sharp and fine
Like savage music striking far-off; and away
On the great uplifted blue palace, lightpools stir and
shine
In the blue glass, domed and distance-soft. 33

In submitting Lawrence's poems to The English Review Jessie Chambers later remarked: 'In 'Dreams Old and Nascent' I knew he was trying to explain himself to me.' 34 In the way it seeks to recognise an emotion through sights and sounds at an open window and then to explain

33. Ms Lal 2.

34. E.T. A Personal Record, p. 157.

that emotion to a woman, 'Dreams Old and Nascent' resembles Matthew Arnold's poem 'Dover Beach' ³⁵ and the nineteenth century resonance is important. To reach an adequate understanding, Lawrence's poem also tries to explain the present in terms of the past. In these poems Lawrence and Arnold are onlookers: 'gods of the ideal mind, who survey with laughter and tears the realm of actuality'. ³⁶ But this qualification applies more to Arnold than Lawrence, who, having thoroughly examined his responses to the aura and attraction of the past goes on to prefer an active participation in the present, looking to the future he and others are helping to bring to birth.

That Lawrence deliberately intended a thorough examination of his response to the past before discussing the limitations of its attraction can be seen in the college notebook, the detailed alterations of which enable us to trace Lawrence's exploration of the relationship between present and past. The second draft shows a fuller treatment of that part where the subject-matter of the poem changes from being the past to become the present, and where the relationship is explored through images. From the interspersed lines (marked 2) below it is clear that Lawrence was unsatisfied with his initial attempt. At the second attempt the images he chooses are consistent with each other and also dramatically presented, as if the 'tumult' at sea, which he imagines, is both experienced and observed, simultaneously:

35. 'Dover Beach' appeared in New Poems, 1867.

36. See Introduction, note 8.

The following passages show how Lawrence progressively defined the relationship between the present and the past:

I can see no hill aright, for the snows of yesteryear
Still cover the slopes with memories and soft
Warm reflections from the sunsets of glowing souls
that were here
Once, and are here forever.

There they lie, they are visible like a picture.

('A Still Afternoon in School.'
First Draft.)

All the bye-gone, hushed years
Streaming back where the mist distils
Have left me the savour of their laughter and tears;
And the sweet, live dream of the old time fills
With colour, the sketch of my own world's form.
My world is a painted fresco of the past
Where the old lives linger, blurred and warm
Obscuring my own young world and substance to the
last.

('Dreams Old and Nascent.' Second
Draft.) 37

(2) All the bye-gone, hushed years
Streaming back where the mist distils
Into forgetfulness: soft-sailing waters, where fears
No longer shake: where the silk sail fills
With the unfelt breeze that ebbs over the seas
^{where} ~~where~~ the storm
Of living has passed, drifting on and on
Through the coloured iridescence that swims in the
warm
Wake of the tumult spent and gone
Hiding the substance of this year with the shadow
of the last.

('Dreams Old and Nascent.' Interspersed
additions to the Second Draft.)

The lines from (2) downward have dispensed with the abstract words: 'yesteryear... memories... souls... of the past... old lives' which mark the first two passages as being less visualised or localised. The final line from the first passage also confirms that Lawrence's original urgency was to explain rather

37. The Second Draft is headed first with the original, then the new title: 'Dreams Old and ~~Unborn~~ Nascent'
38. Without significant changes this passage was preserved from ms. La 1 2, in the Clarke notebook and Amores.

than to show. In the second passage, 'My world is a painted fresco of the past' was more concrete and definitive than 'visible like a picture' and though 'of the past' was omitted from later versions the image of a fresco remains even though Lawrence's additions postpone it in favour of the ship and the storm. The stillness and gentleness of the original observations marking the opening of the poem are now regarded not as entirely attractive, but as too remote from the 'storm of living', from Lawrence's ideal circumstances as a poet, to be permanently valuable. In the third passage he blends together the two necessary concepts, of fixity and movement.

The first draft became longer and more complex as Lawrence began to examine the division implied by its new title.³⁹ He goes on exploring what form the 'storm of life' acquires in the present time. But the lukewarm, altogether tasteless and undemonstrative quality of the present whose impingement seemed at first glance to offer little but intimations of past 'storms' made the nascent part of the poem an urgent if difficult undertaking. Since Lawrence here seizes any opportunity to force the present to live up to his expectations it is the search itself, and the act of attention, which finally becomes as much the subject-matter of the poem as the objects attended to, that is, the men at work on the railway, whose 'savage music' of shunting engines had previously been heard remotely in the distance. The images above already begin to suggest how

39. The title change from 'Unborn' to 'Nascent' in itself suggests the heightened expectation in Lawrence's desired attitude towards the future.

the search itself emerged as the subject-matter. When the poem moves from observation to the mind's eye, and the ship and the storm appear, Lawrence presents an idealised account of the interaction between the exploring mind and the chaos of experience. The experience in this case is, however, treated in the abstract, as 'fears' that 'no longer shake' and as 'the storm of living'. It is not a particular fear or a specific storm but storms of experience in general that attract him, though a particular one would be more welcome.

The English Review version illustrates more clearly than the notebook the importance to Lawrence of challenge, of interaction between himself and his surroundings, that will quicken a sense of the harmonious movement ordering experience. This movement, as described below, gains momentum as soon as someone, the poet himself, perceived it:

Through the wakened afternoon, riding down my dreams
Fluent active figures of men pass along the railway.
There is something stirs in me from the flow of their limbs
as they move
Out of the distance, nearer.
Here in the subtle, rounded flesh
Beats the active ecstasy, suddenly lifting my eyes
Into quick response.
The fascination of the restless Creator, through the
mesh of men
Moving, vibrating endlessly in the rounded flesh
Challenges me, and is answered.⁴⁰

Free verse supervenes the formal rhymes of previous stanzas, conveying the excitement of discovery; and the stress of 'something' that 'stirs in me', of the eyes 'suddenly lifting' invited to

40. The English Review, November 1909, Amores.
Complete Poems, p. 923.

'quick response' confirms an interest in the value of being fascinated as well as that which fascinates.

The remainder of the poem divides its attention between two equal centres of interest. First, the railway workers, the boys bent over their books, and Lawrence himself watching for revelation, and second: 'the restless creator...the Unseen Shaper...the melting, fusing force' that alters the surface of the visible world and the experience of those who share in it. By observing the work of the creator Lawrence believes it possible to glimpse the forces of nature, history and time in new acts of creation happening within and around him. The self he wishes to explore is not merely his own self but the creative, unconscious motion of time. But through his own act of response it fulfils its purpose. Nevertheless, realising that he is still committed to observing the created world and the challenge of contact, he describes the perceived activity of the 'unseen shaper' in terms that stress physicality. The following stanza was omitted from The English Review but the Ameres version resurrects it, and in electing to publish it in 1916 Lawrence must have felt more confident about the statement than ^{when} it was written. In it, the basic activity of bringing to light unconscious emotion, and the importance of the physical world, of the manifest solidity of creation, are recognised. Lawrence participates, as poet, in both:

Oh the terrible ecstasy of the consciousness that I am life!
Oh the miracle of the whole, the widespread, labouring
concentration
Swelling mankind like one bud to bring forth the fruit
of a dream,
Oh the terror of lifting the innermost I out of the sweep
of the impulse of life,

And watching the great Thing labouring through the
 whole round flesh of the world;
 And striving to catch a glimpse of the shape of the
 coming dream,
 As it quickens within the labouring, white-hot metal,
 Catch the scent and the colour of the coming dream,
 Then fall back exhausted into the unconscious, molten life⁴¹

In Collected Poems the two parts of 'Dreams Old and Nascent' were printed as unconnected poems. The disadvantages of this are obvious. The evaluative attitudes of the second part no longer proceed smoothly from the primary observations and these in turn fail to be developed. Since Lawrence used the imagery of imprisonment in the past to attack European industrial society the loss of any foundation for his feelings proved disastrous, and the ensuing judgements lack all the conviction and validity that derive from an actual reported experience. Often in Pansies Lawrence was able to express these ideas dangerously and effectively in a style that catches the feeling, however momentary and small, just as it occurs. The addition of rhyme to the revision of 'Dreams Nascent' only cramped the already hopeless access to true feeling, and other alterations merely prove that whatever its faults the earlier poem by remaining true to the original response had made considerable headway. The line from the notebook that describes: 'lifting the innermost I out of the sweep of the impulse of life' explains a process not confined to the early poems, and one which proved more than worthy of development.

41. Amores. Complete Poems, p. 926.

Lawrence's first book of poems was published in 1913 and in reviewing the book Ezra Pound wrote:

I knew of no one else who could have presented the wordy tragedy of 'Whether or Not' with such vigour and economy. 'Violets' at the pen of any of the other younger men would have descended into music-hall sentiment. As it is both poems are great art. The poems are narrative and quotation in fragments is therefore worse than useless. It is for this narrative verse that I think Mr. Lawrence is to be esteemed almost as much as we esteem him for his prose.⁴²

Between the publication of Love Poems and Pound's review, Sons and Lovers appeared in May of that year, and Pound, a great admirer of Lawrence's prose, had more than likely read it before September. It is also possible that Pound esteemed the two narrative poems mentioned above not only as much as Lawrence's published prose but for the same reasons. Both poems exhibit a distinct moral and aesthetic confidence, and a dramatic working out of those problems that involved a method and style as much as a theme. Like Sons and Lovers the narrative explores differing forms of imaginative response through their presentation in conflict.

Since an early draft of 'Violets' is to be found in the notebook manuscript, this poem affords an opportunity to study the new development in Lawrence's poetry which took place at a later date in his prose. Since the reported events in the poem were fictitious, or at least presented as fiction, revision did not depend on fresh contact with an emotion Lawrence had long since outgrown, as did that of 'Dreams Old and Nascent', and had Pound read the final

42. Ezra Pound in New Freewoman, Sept. 1913.

version of 'Violets' in 1928, as indeed he may have, he would have been even more delighted. Lawrence improved the early draft for publication in Love Poems and made further alterations before the poem's final appearance in Collected Poems.

The drama of the poem occurs between two interpretations of the events at a funeral which have a direct bearing on the dead man's way of life. The speaker compares his own response with that of his sister, both relatives of the dead man, Ted. The speaker notices that a third person is also present, a girl who by her distress appears to have been more deeply involved with Ted, than anyone else. It is she who when the official mourners have left throws a handful of violets into his grave. The speaker's sister fails even to notice her and when told about her sourly retorts that that is just one more bit of evidence for the fact of Ted's decline into drink and bad ways. The speaker, who is also Lawrence, implies that the real cause, far from being the girl, is the sister's cold moral attitude to Ted when he was alive.

The notebook draft begins by helping the reader to visualise the graveside and by acquainting him with the mourner's various attitudes. Because so much observation and interpretation of past events has already accumulated in the minds of the two persons discussing the funeral scene, great condensation was needed. The way in which impressions have already been formed about Ted's life is exemplified by their attitude to his funeral, where it is made obvious by every available means. Their use of dialect indicates frankness and intimate contact with recent local life. Words of observing: 'Did ter notice...' and 'Nay I saw newt but...' direct our thoughts to the surroundings and events and by the second

stanza Lawrence has shown how contrasting 'acts of attention' were made at the graveside:

'Did ter notice that lass, sister, as stood away back
By a head-stone?'-
'Nay, I saw nowt but th' coffina, an' th' yeller clay, an'
'ow th' black
Was blown'-

'While th' parson was prayin', I watches 'er, an' she wor
To bits'- [fair shaken
'I could think o' nowt but our Ted, an' 'im taken
In his wild fits.'-

'When you'd gone, I slipped back, ter see who she might be-
Poor thing'-
'No good, I warrant: this trouble is such as she
Helped to bring.'⁴³

Lawrence shows not only who is blaming whom and why, but how. The sister has only seen the black clothes blowing and has only been able to think of Ted's degradation. To the brother the most significant event was the unexpected appearance of the girl, and of her visible distress. Their conversation amounts to two contrasting ways of seeing that also determined the implied narrative of Ted's decline. The second version in Love Poems extends the sister's speech to illustrate how pious thoughts prevented her noticing the girl patiently waiting until the formal ceremony is over:

-How should I be lookin' round
An' me standin' on the plank
Beside the open ground,
Where our Ted 'ud soon be sank?

Yi, an' 'im that young,
Snapped sudden out of all
His wickedness, among
Pals worse n'r any name as you could call.⁴⁴

43. Ms. 1

44. Love Poems and Others, (1912). Complete Poems, p. 928.

In general the second version shows greater confidence in evaluating the two attitudes while the notebook version remains a series of visual impressions:

'You should 'a seen her slive up when we'd gone
You should 'a seen her kneel an' look down.
I couldna' see her face, but her little neck shone
White, when the wind shifted her hair; that was soft an'
brown,

'An' 'er body fair shook again
Wi' little sobs as you scarce could hear
An' she undid 'er jacket neck, an' then
A lot o' violets fell out of 'er bosom on 'im down theer.

'They was wild ones, white and blue;-I could tell
Because they was warm, an' the wind blew
Me a little wift, an' I knew the smell
Then she rummaged her hand in 'er bosom, an' kissed the last
little few.

'I come away, for fear she should see
Me watchin'. Dost think there was 'owt between 'em?
Tha knows 'e'd a winsom way wi' 'im, an' she
Was th' little, lovin' sort, as 'as nowt ter screen 'em.'⁴⁵

The last line is the furthest the notebook comes to a direct judgement. It implies that while the girl had nothing the sister had her social and moral principles to screen her, and these did screen her even during the funeral from seeing the girl or from feeling any warmth herself. But even at the earliest attempt Lawrence had achieved considerable dramatic clarity. The version published just before Sons and Lovers shows an explicit qualification of the sister's attitude:

Let be that; there's some o' the' bad as we
Like better nor all your good, an' 'e was one.⁴⁶

45. Ms. Lal 2. Complete Poems, p. 927.

46. Love Poems and Others. (1912). Complete Poems. p. 928.

The sister is one, possibly the first, of a succession of women Lawrence condemned for allowing their moral **ideals** to prevent any fresh contact with others or unhampered assessment of their own experience. As he developed his own thoughts about imaginative response the more he realised that if judgements on others, on one-self and on life have to be made, then such contact as the woman ignores in 'Violets' is essential if experience is to be properly understood, and not falsified in the process. At his best Lawrence offers the reader not moral judgements at all but, like the poets of Apocalypse, a series of dynamic images evolved through direct response to contact with the physical world. Already in the notebook version he affirms a strong, sensitive awareness of that 'quiet flow of touch' between the girl, the violets and her lover. The final version of 'Violets' published in Collected Poems not only preserves the sensuous impressions of the original version but develops them to the point where in a new additional stanza the speaker is expressing his conclusions about the sister and the girl in 'images of the real dynamic value':

But I thowt ter mysen, as that wer th' only bit
 O' warmth as 'e got down theer; th' rest wer stone cold.
 From that bit of a wench's bosom; 'ed be glad of it,
 Gladder nor of thy lilies, if tha maun be told.⁴⁷

The original contrast is here expressed in images of warmth and stone celdness. The **violet**s and lil ies are both actual and symbolic, and by reason of previous associations in the poem, represent life and death: the real life received from the girl, and the real death from the sister's puritanism.

47. Collected Poems, (1928). Complete Poems, p. 61.

The warmth of the violets obviously does not restore the man to life and his gladness to receive them is only real in so far as it can be imagined. Imaginative reality is nevertheless a valid one and often accompanied in the early poems by a sense almost of hallucination, of the actual world altered under the stress of emotion. This was the case in 'End of Another Home Holiday' where the roofs of the village appear 'pitiful, beseeching, resigned' and the midnight bell booms reproachfully over the landscape. It is isolation of these details which precedes the eventual revelation of attendant feelings. In several of the early love poems the quantity of hallucination is extreme. 'Snapdragon' provides one example of the conscious recognition of unconscious and uncontrollable feeling welling up in images that distort normal reality as it is distorted under emotional stress:

She spoke, and I closed my eyes
To shut hallucinations out.
I echoed with surprise
Hearing my mere lips shout
The answer they did devise.

Again I saw a brown bird hover
Over the flowers at my feet;
I felt a brown bird hover
Over my heart, and sweet
Its shadow lay on my heart.
I thought I saw on the clover
A brown bee pulling apart
The closed flesh of the clover
And burrowing in its heart.⁴⁸

In this case no bird, bee or clover exists in the surroundings, but only a girl's hand, yet the actual facts of its softness and heat and sun-burnt colour, and of some imminent exposure of sexual

48. Collected Poems. (1928). Complete Poems, pp. 122-126.

emotions, have been carried through into images. Jessie Chambers records how Lawrence deliberately went to visit the girl in order to find out something about his feelings towards women.⁴⁹ But far from being a poem of self-exploration, bringing hidden emotions to the surface, as we would therefore expect it to be, 'Snapdragon' expresses the reactions of a male persona who tries, albeit unsuccessfully, first of all to suppress or resist his feelings because they are so overpowering. In a way he lets the pressure build up in order to test its strength. Only later does he change his mind and encourage the girl to share in his discoveries. Several of Lawrence's early love poems contain the extreme poetic effects of 'Snapdragon', but in those written after his mother's death in 1912, simplicity and calm prevail upon over-excitement.

Of these, several small pieces may be found in the notebook describing the same slight momentary observations that Lawrence preserved in Sons and Lovers during the account of the death of Mrs. Morel. They conform to no pattern beyond being simple impressions in which small events and resemblances become loaded with intense emotion. Usually Lawrence makes no attempt to explain or understand so that the poems remain as fragments. The interrogative mood only occurs rarely, as in the following:

A yellow leaf from the darkness
Hops like a frog along the rain-bright pavement
Before me

Why do I stand still, with fear ?

I was thinking about my mother -

But where am I, and she, where is she ? 50

49. E.T. A Personal Record, p. 142.

50. Ms. L.1.1 2.

As I pause at the side of the bath
And forget,
As the sun comes in the bathroom
I pause, and forget
I forget the towel and my wet limbs,
I feel the sun on me.

How am I clotted together
Out of the soft matrix
The air, and the flowing ~~sunshine~~, and bright dust.

What is it that clots me, holds me together out of these,
these things - apart ?
Why should I grieve that my mother is no longer clotted
together
No longer a large fleck, moving in the sunshine
But dissipated, dissolved again
Why should it grieve me ?

Ah, but my mother had blue eyes - 51

Why does the thin grey strand
Floating from between my fingers
Where my cigarette burns forgotten
Why does it trouble me

Ah, you will understand -
When I carried my mother downstairs
A few times only, at the beginning of
her brief sickness
I would find on my coat, floating, a loose,
long grey hair. 52

Apart from such phrases as 'the rain-bright pavement' the gauche
verboosity that prevails even in the best of the early poems has here
been filed away and the language as well as the detail used in ways
remarkably close to the novel.⁵³ At a later stage Lawrence des-
cribed the technique of Sons and Lovers as 'the accumulation of
objects under the powerful light of emotion' but he had produced
two novels before this technique, already developed in his poetry,

51. Ms. Lal 2.

52. Ibid.

53. 'a loose, long grey hair', see Sons and Lovers, p. 457.

began to emerge in his prose. The above fragments occur in the final pages of the notebook, and by their extreme immediacy appear to have been written not long after, or even on the occasion of, the impressions they describe. But the method of fusing questions with observations Lawrence had already achieved in 1908 with 'End of Another Home Holiday'. The style of the final pages of Sons and Lovers rests at a point where the questions have already been answered, and contains a greater part of narrative than the exploratory position of the poems:

Who could say his mother had lived and did not live? She had been in one place, and was in another; that was all. And his soul could not leave her wherever she was. Now she was gone abroad into the night, and he was with her still. They were together. But yet there was his body, his chest, that leaned against a stile, his hands on the wooden bar. They seemed something. Where was he? -one tiny upright speck of flesh, less than an ear of wheat lost in the field. He could not bear it. On every side the immense dark silence seemed pressing him, so tiny a spark, into extinction, and yet, almost nothing, he could not be extinct.⁵⁴

Most of the questions are implied, but the ultimate impression is that they are contained within a description of a physical condition. Sons and Lovers points backward to the early poems and forward to The Rainbow. By The Rainbow Lawrence's predilection for characters capable of imaginative response such as that found in the early poems, had been modified. His sympathy had widened. But the inadequacies of his first novel The White Peacock can be explained by its remaining outside that line of development which began in the early poems.

54. Sons and Lovers, p. 510.

This selection of poems attempts to show the thematic and technical importance of imaginative response, as learnt from evidence in the notebook ~~manuscript~~. Even the available material illustrates Lawrence's urgency at this stage to write about almost everything with which he came into contact. Even so, persistent themes and attitudes prevail upon confusion. Much of what emerged he took up again in the novels, stories, and subsequent poems, as his inquisitiveness never ceased to build on what he discovered. If, consciously or unconsciously, Lawrence struggled in his early poems to balance the spiritual with the sensual aspects of his personality then he had already begun to practise the ideas formulated by his last essays Etruscan Places. They are the crude foundation stone supporting the key stone of his last works.

The Etruscan augur possessed an ability to interpret events in the outer world as portents or symbols. His position differed from Lawrence's only in so far as he was never troubled by an outer world that reflected human wastage and discord. His world was not 'outside' in the sense that Lawrence felt his own to be at times. From the early poems we realise that Lawrence recognised such phenomena, the London suburbs for example, the school classroom, the beggars under Waterloo Bridge, with no lack of intensity or involvement. But Lawrence stood closer to the augur in the technique set working on occasions of unexplained inward anxiety, through which a perplexing emotion could be exposed and resolved. Confusion invited imaginative exploration of a kind that associated him with primitive Italy. His early appreciation of the natural world as an

inexhaustable source of resemblances ended in admiration for the kind of art he found in the Etruscan tombs.

Even though only a few poems were successful in their form of enquiry, a general urgency can be felt even in the undeveloped fragments. It ran counter to the frequent decline into a falsely 'poetic', mannered style. Lawrence's early aesthetic sense appears determined by an intense feeling for natural vitality, but also by a moral necessity to grasp the direction of his own inner life and that of others. But this spiritual concern could only reach its goal by uniting with Lawrence's alertness to his surroundings, and by learning from his response, in the manner of an augur, the hidden sources of conflict.

CHAPTER TWO: The Revisions of The White Peacock.

I must cut out many pages of talk, and replace them with a few paragraphs of plain description or narrative; secondly, one is cloyed with metaphoric fancy; thirdly, folk talk about themes too much; -slight incidents - such as the sugar in Eugénie - should display character, not fine speeches; fourthly, I don't believe Lettie ever did break her engagement with Leslie - she married him. The construction - changeable and erratic as it is - is defensible; there are some fine, swift bits...I will defend my construction throughout... the theme is abominable - I blush for myself.¹

All mysteries and possibilities lie in things and happenings, so give us the things and happenings, and try just to show the flush of mystery in them, but don't begin with a mystery and end with a feelish concrete thing, like taking Death and making a figure with 'yellow topaz eyes - each a jewel,' or a vulgar, bestial 'Mammon' with long teeth, as Watts does. Some of Watts's pictures are commonplace, and a trifle vulgar. But look at his 'Love and Death' - its beauty lies in the aesthetic unknowable effect of line, poise, shadow, and then in the blurred idea that Death is shrouded, but a dark embracing mother, who sleeps over us, and frightens us because we are children. It is no good trying to model a definite figure out of a mystery; it only cheapens the great thing.²

The two letters from which the above extracts are taken were written while Lawrence was still at work on The White Peacock. They both contain statements of the author's intentions. In both, these intentions differ radically from the motivation behind the early poems and from the expressed likeness of poetic art to divination as clarified in Etruscan Places.

1. Letter to Blanche Jennings, 11 November 1908. Collected Letters, p. 36.
2. Ibid. p. 47-8.

Lawrence's proposed alterations were carried out.³ Whether the original version of the novel had been an exploratory interpretation of the events and of their relationships by the characters we do not know. But from the letters it is clear that Lawrence did not intend that to be the case in his revisions. Instead, character is to be 'displayed! from a detached point, by 'slight incidents'. Plain description was preferred to 'talk about themes', and explicit meaning or the search for it avoided in favour of 'the things and happenings' which without doubt do occupy large portions of the published novel.

Working against the intentions stated in the two letters the enormous potential of unrevealed feeling in the characters suggests that self-exploration could have altered the course of the story almost beyond recognition. Had self-exploration been successful Lettie would not have married Leslie as she was deemed to do in the revised novel, and perhaps she might even have married George. These important items of the narrative have their root in the novelist's style. Whereas in the early poems the individual attempts by an imaginative process of thought and observation to expose his feelings to himself and to know them, in The White Peacock this process was avoided.

In the light of the most successful of the early poems, and of Etruscan Places and Apocalypse the two letters about The White

3. Lawrence began The White Peacock (then Laetitia) in the Spring of 1906. A second version was completed by April 1908 and a third begun the following January. The manuscript of this version was copied out and sent to Heinemann, December 1909. Lawrence then made alterations to the manuscript, many of which are discussed below.

Peacock falsely assume that 'plain description' and 'metaphoric fancy' are opposites, that the first is aesthetically preferable to the second, while in fact metaphor does not have to be fanciful nor description plain. Without its divining and exploratory purpose, metaphor, as is often the case in the novel, is likely, in Lawrence's case, to become fanciful, for his use of metaphor is only successful where it accurately preserves a sense of personal experience or contact as an aid to insight and not as a stylised indulgence. But Lawrence's aesthetic was in 1909 still in the process of formation, and in The White Peacock metaphoric fancy is often condemned in connection with works of art in general.

In the second letter Lawrence expresses a strong mistrust for paintings which, by neglecting accurate observation, merely render their subjects as unmeaningful abstractions. Such works fail to blend realism with abstraction, to the extent that both appear vulgar or commonplace in each other's company. Guarding against this, Lawrence preferred to confine his own style to realism and description, and to include as much of this as did not excite too intimate a revelation of his important feelings. His family life as it was and his relationship with Jessie Chambers are withheld until Sons and Lovers. Moreover, even though a sense of the quality of revelation in works of art finds its way into The White Peacock, these are frequently treated with cynicism and used decoratively, or associated with nostalgia and social accomplishment.

A further stumbling block is the emphasis on narrative, created by the novel's presentation. All we know about the characters is confined to the records of the narrator and we therefore have no way of following to its conclusions the intimate thought process of each

character as it occurs.⁴ Early in the novel Lettie's response to her surroundings is given to us at second hand:

The death of the man who was our father changed our lives. It was not that we suffered a great grief; the chief trouble was the unanswered crying of failure. But we were changed in our feelings and in our relations; there was a new consciousness, a new carefulness.

We had lived between the woods and the water all our lives, Lettie and I, and she had sought the bright notes in everything. She seemed to hear the water laughing, and the leaves tittering and giggling like young girls; the aspen fluttered like the draperies of a flirt, and the sound of the wood-pigeons was almost foolish in its sentimentality.

Lately, however, she had noticed again the cruel pitiful crying of a hedgehog caught in a gin, and she had noticed the traps for the fierce little murderers, traps walled in with a small fence of fir, and baited with the guts of a killed rabbit.

On an afternoon a short time after our visit to Cossethay, Lettie sat in the window seat.⁵

In a later novel by Lawrence this would have occupied a central position; here it merely stands as an introductory passage to the chapter 'A scent of Blood' in which Lettie sees George break a rabbit's neck, and where, in conversation afterwards with George's mother the notion is put forward that: 'Men are all brutes'.⁶ The resonances are there, but kept at bay by social cheeriness, and the 'plain' if intensely vivid description of the hunting scene. It is not the occasion here to admire the excitement of language and accuracy with which Lawrence flavours his descriptions but to point out the significant over-dependence upon them beyond which he moved to write more profound novels than The White Peacock. The youthfulness of the characters, and the deeply felt vitality of the

4. One other example, from Lawrence's works, of a narrator through whose guidance the entire story unfolds, is 'A fragment of Stained Glass'. Originally 'Legend', this story was begun at about the same time as The White Peacock.

5. The White Peacock, p. 59.

6. Ibid. p. 67.

natural world demanding recognition did not lend themselves at this stage to the developed style of the mature novelist, and the only disparaging aspect of this fact is that in the poems Lawrence had already begun to create a language and a stance towards personal experience whereby the full pattern of inner life could be exposed.

In 'The Wild Common' and 'End of Another Home Holiday' this imaginative exposure is only felt to be necessary once the individual senses disharmony between himself and his surroundings, or other people. Nostalgia is but one form of his distress and a particularly prevalent one in the novel. The novel begins in a landscape in fact identical to that in 'The Wild Common' but whose significant forms convey feelings of lost vitality. The lustre that used to pervade the valley of Nethermere has faded. The immediate foreground is overshadowed by past centuries when no such shadow existed. Fish in the pool are: 'shadowy...grey...descendants of the silvery things that had darted away from the monks, in the young days when the valley was lusty.'⁷ The construction of the scene owes its suggestiveness to the fact that Cyril's imagination is engaged elsewhere than totally by the present and that he regrets this fact. No immediacy in the present can be a substitute for what is past. And though Cyril attempts to analyse his response to the surroundings, nostalgia prevents attention to the really engaging matters at hand. This submission to nostalgia, which is never overcome by the main characters in the story, pervades the novel.

Occupying the central position in the life of Nethermere, and as a farmer a remnant of its once vivid activity, George Saxton

7. The White Peacock, p. 13.

arouses the interest of Cyril and Lettie Beardsall. Yet both of them sense, correctly, that their future and that of George will follow divergent paths, and that despite, even because of his vitalistic appeal, their friendship with him is doomed. The narrator, Cyril, cynically assumes this outcome to be unavoidable, and the sexual relationship between Lettie and George remains suppressed by them until no significant action can be taken. But the fact that the process of discovery, self-realisation and choice is not an operant force in their lives, is partly caused by a weakness in the novelist's style. It is difficult to be sure whether Lawrence, in full control of his prose style, and certain of his theme, wished to show how the attraction between a refined woman and an uneducated man could only end in disaster, or whether, lacking that control and certainty, it was not within his power to present the imaginative response either would need to reach a true appreciation of the other. Contingent impressions, and particularly the intentions Lawrence declared in the two letters quoted at the beginning of this chapter suggest that it is the lack of the young novelist's confidence and understanding of imaginative reactions that envelops the characters of The White Peacock in an atmosphere of nostalgia and tragedy.

In later novels, the successful union between two lovers frequently originates in their capacity for a response notably absent from Lawrence's first novel. The Rainbow for example typifies on many occasions a use of style that allows the reader to overhear the characters' own thoughts as their responses develop and their decisions are reached. Lydia Lensky, crushed between her past life in Poland and her new life in England, finds fresh responses to the English Spring forced upon her unconscious mind. Her re-awakening

precedes her recognition of Tom Brangwen as the man she will marry. Certain details in the outer world urgently insist she acknowledge her spiritual state, and the narrative not only records but becomes her actual thoughts as they occur:

She could neither wake nor sleep. As if crushed between the past and the future, like a flower that comes above-ground to find a great stone lying above it, she was helpless.

The bewilderment and helplessness continued, she was surrounded by great moving masses that must crush her. And there was no escape. Save in the old obliviousness, the cold darkness she strove to retain. But the vicar showed her eggs in the thrush's nest near the back door. She saw herself the mother-thrush upon the nest, and the way her wings were spread, so eager down upon her secret. The tense, eager, nesting wings moved her beyond endurance. She thought of them in the morning, when she heard the thrush whistling as he got up, and she thought 'Why didn't I die out there, why am I brought here?'⁸

Such a style, by containing the imaginative process within the novel, divides these characters who are capable of self-realisation from those who are not, while the style of The White Peacock offers heroes and heroines, who, from beginning to end, all suffer partial or complete emotional blindness. The alternation of report with questions and commands: 'And there was no escape... 'Why didn't I die out there, why am I brought here?' ' has become a translation into novel form of the approach to experience through poetry. One other equally large distinction between the two novels to be found in this short passage is that visual detail in The Rainbow only emerges from the unspecified background at moments of emotional revelation. The preceding period of ungrasped feeling appears to Lydia as 'great moving masses that must crush her.' Interdependently, these alternative ways of seeing place individual awareness at the centre of our attention, events and landscapes being simply called.

8. The Rainbow, pp. 54-55.

called in to aid the analysis.

The association between works of art and self-realisation comes to be in Lawrence's case a matter of central importance to any interpretation of his works.⁹ The aesthetic anxiety previously noted first occurs in The White Peacock in a scene between Lettie and George. Self-realisation in this case would involve both characters in a confession of sexual attraction, but the confession is only half-admitted. Their social incompatibility dominates the relationship and works of art, though calling forth strong responses from George, are still seen as a privilege enjoyed by the educated. George's responses therefore are devalued by Lettie where they could have been constructive. Class barriers, human emotions, and the means through which human beings may become acquainted with their emotions, are presented in conflict with each other. While positive links could have been formed between art and revealed emotion, the negative element seems to be Lawrence's constant emphasis on social position, and the sense that this alone, ultimately and eventually, as one becomes an adult in the world, maintains authority. Lettie is already prepared to think of George as uncivilised and primitive while she herself fails to allow art its fullest function. Contradicted by him she uses her social position as a prop thus prejudging him and neutralising their discussion:

'If,' said she, 'an ancient Briton in his skins came and contradicted me as you do, wouldn't you tell him not to make an ass of himself?'

'I don't know', he said.

'Then you ought to', she replied. 'You know nothing.'¹⁰

9. See Keith Alldritt, The Visual Imagination of D.H. Lawrence (1971)

10. The White Peacock, pp. 40-41.

Lettie and George are looking at a book of English landscape paintings. Confronted with one picture Lettie applies it to their own lives, inviting for once a positive response to art. But her discoveries from the painting merely emphasise, not her emotional attraction to George, but the cultural distance between them:

'But,' said Lettie, 'he is a real realist, he makes common things beautiful, he sees the mystery and magnificence that envelops us even when we work menially. I do know and I can speak. If I hoed in the fields beside you - ' This was a very new idea for him, almost a shock to his imagination, and she talked unheeded. The picture under discussion was a water-colour - 'Hoeing' by Clausen.¹¹

So far Lettie advances. And it is a fair distance. Common things are made beautiful to her mind, and she places herself a little incongruously but nevertheless spontaneously in the picture with George. It is a shock to his imagination. And she talks unheeded. But the advance stops as she continues:

'You'd be just that colour in the sunset,' she said, thus bringing him back to the subject, 'and if you looked at the ground you'd find there was a sense of warm gold fire in it, and once you'd perceived the colour, it would strengthen till you'd see nothing else. You are blind; you are only half-born; you are gross with good living and heavy sleeping. You are a piano which will only play a dozen common notes. Sunset is nothing to you - it merely happens anywhere.'¹²

Lettie condemns George for being culturally incapable of imaginative response. The kind of response she has in mind, where details strengthen till one sees nothing else, is indeed of that imaginative kind resembling the passage from The Rainbow where Lydia is shown the thrush: 'its tense eager nesting wings moved her beyond endur-

¹¹. The White Peacock, p. 41.

¹². Ibid. pp. 41-42.

ance.¹³ But as the rest of the scene suggests, it is Lettie who inclines to trivialise such responses:

They turned on, chatting casually, till George suddenly exclaimed, 'There!'

It was Maurice Greiffenhagen's 'Idyll'.

'What of it?' she asked, gradually flushing. She remembered her own enthusiasm over the picture.

'Wouldn't it be fine?' he exclaimed, looking at her with glowing eyes, his teeth showing white in a smile that was not amusement.

'What?' she asked, dropping her head in confusion.

'That - a girl like that - half afraid - and passion!' He lit up curiously.

'She may well be half afraid, when the barbarian comes out in his glory, skins and all.'

... 'But I shouldn't' - he insisted, 'I don't know whether I should like any girl I know to - '

'Precious Sir Galahad,' she said in a mock caressing voice, and stroking his cheek with her finger, 'You ought to have been a monk - a martyr, a Carthusian.'

He laughed, taking no notice. He was breathlessly quivering under the new sensation of heavy, unappeased fire in his breast and in the muscles of his arms. He glanced at her bosom and shivered.

'Are you studying just how to play the part?' she asked.¹⁴

Calling George a barbarian one minute, Sir Galahad the next, and introducing on her own initiative the idea that he should be playing a part, adds a false note to a genuine emotion. The real value of the paintings as their discussion hints is that they have a wider relevance, a further resonance beyond the confines of their subject. Even to the untutored George the relevance in this case is obvious. But Lettie resists it. Her assumption that such art can be safely self-contained from life bears out her final remark. If George is only an actor then he is not dangerous. But her assumption reduces the capacity of self-realisation in works of art as simultaneously it resists the necessity for self-realisation in life. The novel's

13. The Rainbow, p. 55.

14. The White Peacock, pp. 42-43.

fundamental immaturity maintains this ironic tone to the end. The published version nevertheless does contain a fuller treatment of the emotions of the lovers. The following passage from the unrevised manuscript allows George to answer Lettie's mocking accusation. Although inarticulately, George follows the approach to feeling the picture has invited, before this is dismissed as unreal, valid within the framework of the painting but not outside it:

just

'Are you studying how to play the part?' she asked.
 'No - but - I can just feel -'
 'What?'
 'The soft touch of that shoulder against my face.'
 'Dear me, you're imagining -' she mocked.
 'Well?' he replied, his eyes widening and laughing dangerously, with the fixed laugh of imaginings.
 She turned the picture over.
 'But you're not like that girl' he said.
 She laughed aloud at the suggestion, exclaiming with mockery, 'Pity, isn't it.'
 He looked at her with his dark, serious eyes. He was becoming childish in his naivete.
 'Am I like the man?' he asked.
 'Quite' she said, adding in French, 'animal'.
 His face fell with disappointment.
 She piled the books together and carried them off.
 At the door she turned, and said 'Are you admiring my strength?' His pose was magnificent.
 ... While she was out, he sat twisting his moustache.
 She came back along the hall talking madly to herself in French. Having been much impressed by Sarah Bernhardt's 'Dame au Camélias' and 'Adrienne Lecouvreur', Lettie had caught something of the weird tone of this great actress, and her raillery and mockery came out in little wild waves. She laughed at him, and at herself, and at men in general, and at love in particular.

15

Lawrence revisions to the manuscript do not alter the final paragraph of this passage. Although his later treatment of their responses deepens and enriches their conversation, Lettie is still allowed to defeat George by retreating into an artificial world where she can play the part of actress, and this aspect of her behaviour remains the predominant one.

In both version Lettie flirts with art as she does with George.¹⁶ She typifies in this the cultured society whose advantage over George supposedly combines savoir faire with a high level of consciousness. But her accusation that George is a barbarian betrays her failure to comprehend the real nature of imaginative activity, and highlights an equal nervousness on the part of the novelist.

The following passages, also taken from this scene, show that a large quantity of undiscovered emotion persists, half-articulated, below the surface of the narrative and that Lawrence was trying hard to find a way of revealing it. Birth from one stage of life into another obviously concerned Lydia in the quoted passage from The Rainbow, and as revealed by her anxiety it also concerns Lettie. It is especially relevant to the theme of growing up and the difficulties of subsequent adaptation to adult life which so obviously concerned Lawrence. In the manuscript of The White Peacock Lettie's speech below was altered in Lawrence's revision. It is typical of one significant kind of revision found throughout. The original drafts of the novel were copied out to produce a legible script which Lawrence then rewrote or left unrevised. His revisions often consisted of the removal of passages which distracted from plain description or were over-metaphorical in the treatment of the surroundings and landscapes. They bear out the intentions expressed in the letter of 1908.

16. The White Peacock pp. 43 - 4.

As for me the flower is born in me, and almost perfected. I believe a bulb suffers when it begins to form a flower - suffers, feeling a new urging at its heart - urging that comes from beyond itself, and forces the little thing to realise itself, a fragment which thought itself complete, a perfect universe, before. Oh I do long for my childhood now that I feel perplexed. But I long more for my womanhood, when the flower of my soul travels into the sunlight towards fruition. It makes a quick, warm feeling in my breast. I wish something would come to set me into my second activity, my second life, which is full of strange small flowers that look like weeds.

(Manuscript before revision)

As for me, the flower is born in me, but it wants bringing forth. Things don't flower if they're overfed. You have to suffer before you blossom in this life. When death is just touching a plant, it forces it into a passion of flowering. You wonder how I have touched death. You don't know. There's always a sense of death in this home. I believe my mother hated my father before I was born. That was death in her veins for me before I was born. It makes a difference.

(Revisions to manuscript. Published Version.) 17

The second sentence was deleted from the text and its meaning expressed, in the published novel, by the brief statement:

'When death is just touching a plant it forces it into a passion of flowering.' Before revision the flower metaphor falsifies the subject about which Lettie is speaking, by distracting our attention from the actual subject, which is her own state of mind and not the emotions of flowers. Rewritten, Lettie's subjective impression of how plants flower is reduced to the more factual prose of the sentence from the published novel. In revision, metaphors are explained: 'You have to suffer before you blossom...' or more general-

17. The White Peacock p. 42. Overall, the revisions are identical to the text of the published novel.

ised: 'Things don't flower if they're overfed.' The hallucinatory quality of the poems where images are allowed to take over and carry the dramatic weight of emotion are carefully handled by Lawrence in revision.

But the need for carefulness indicates that this is a poetic speech. The published version reveals a more serious attempt to bring unconscious material to the light, but even here such material belongs to an experience outside the novel. Imagination, as has been noticed, more often than otherwise in Lawrence's work, is called into play whenever serious tensions threaten the individual's relationship with others or with the world. Whenever, to borrow Lettie's words, there is a: 'sense of death' the healing apparatus will force the individual towards maturity. But the healing apparatus works also towards a higher degree of consciousness by concentrating the mind upon a recurrent series of sensuous impressions until an image of the world and of the individual related to it is revealed. Not insignificantly, Lettie's speech occurs during a discussion about art, and art that has a good deal of personal relevance for her. Her attitude to George as stated here has more solidity for not relying upon the dubious pretensions of her social class. Lettie does indeed make George suffer, but her reasons too easily become complicated by the class question later on, and by the false overtones of culture she acquires vicariously from her class background. The 'sense of death' that haunts the Beardsalls and haunted Lawrence's own household, is wishfully substituted in the novel for French speaking and piano playing, and finally it is Lettie who adopts a life of insulated ease. However much The White Peacock appears to be a novel about class, the real basis

upon which higher awareness is founded is, with the exception of a small number of occasions, consistently neglected. Had this not been so, the real question of how sensual stability, as represented by George, and further by the gamekeeper Annable, could somehow unite with imaginative awareness without the two destroying each other, might have begun to be answered.

II

If The White Peacock is not in any profound sense a novel about class what then is it? It is not, like The Rainbow, a novel about characters. If Lawrence described his next novel after Sons and Lovers as 'all analytical' then The White Peacock was the least analytical of all his novels. Touched on briefly, one difference from The Rainbow is the way in which landscapes or surroundings in the later novel, surroundings including the interiors of farmhouses and cathedrals, come into focus only at moments of revealed emotion, when characters realise their certain significance in their lives. Even the great landscape at the beginning of The Rainbow, symbolically occupies the foreground of life only because the earlier Brangwens move inseparably from its seasonal impulse. The White Peacock by contrast, is about landscape as a separate subject-matter from character, and a far less degree of selection governs the use Lawrence makes of it.

Though there are many instances where landscape reveals to the characters insights into their own lives, this is not consistently the case, and even when it is, their response fails to resolve itself into any decisive action. Too often, 'metaphoric fancy'

litters the landscape even though much was cleaned away during the revisions. Metaphors possibly used to clarify emotion frequently decline into mannered decorativeness. This can be seen in the revisions to the following scene where Lettie, Cyril, Emily and Leslie are walking in the woods:

We turned aside, and climbed the hill through the woods. Velvety green sprigs of dog-mercury were scattered on the red soil. We came to the top of a slope, where the wood thinned. As I talked to Emily I became dimly aware of a whiteness over the ground. She exclaimed with surprise, and I found that I was walking, in the first shades of twilight, over clumps of snowdrops. The hazels were thin, and only here and there an oak tree uprose. All the ground was white with snowdrops, like drops of manna scattered over the red earth, on the grey-green cluster of leaves. There was a deep little dell, sharp sloping like a cup, and a white sprinkling of flowers all the way down, with white flowers showing pale among the first inpouring of shadow at the bottom. The earth was red and warm, pricked with the dark, succulent green of bluebell sheaths, and embroidered with grey-green clusters of spears, and many white flowerets. High above, above the light tracery of hazel, the weird oaks tangled in the sunset. Below, in the first shadows, drooped hosts of little white flowers, so silent and sad; it seemed like a holy communion of pure wild things, numberless, frail, and folded meekly in the evening light. Other flower companies are glad; stately barbaric hoards of blue-bells, merry-headed cowslip groups, even light, tossing wood anemones; but snowdrops are sad and mysterious. We have lost their meaning. They do not belong to us, who ravish them. The girls bent among them, touching them with their fingers, and symbolizing the yearning which I felt. Folded in the twilight, these conquered flowerets are sad like forlorn little friends of dryads.¹⁸

The first part of the passage up to line 19 ('like a holy communion') consists of plain description. As noticed by K. Alldritt, the description has the quality of concentrated and sensuous observation.¹⁹ Lawrence expends a great deal of effort simply in conveying the exact appearance and feel of the described object.

18. The White Peacock, p. 153.

19. Alldritt, The Visual Imagination of D.H. Lawrence, (1971), pp. 12-13.

'Velvety green sprigs of dog-mercury...the earth red and warm, pricked with dark succulent green of bluebell sheaths...' but rather than picking out details of essential imaginative importance the novelist's mind plays delightedly over the whole scene with an almost botanical curiosity. As gradually the near luminous presence of the mysterious snowdrops focuses his attention, and the sense of his concentrating consciousness strengthens, the passage declines into 'metaphoric fancy'. Even though metaphors enhance the religious atmosphere and Cyril is conscious by the end of this passage of an acute sense of loss, little attempt is made to evaluate that loss thoroughly or to place the religious aura in context. A discussion between the main characters as to what kind of loss or meaning is involved forms the main episode in the chapter beginning Part Two of the published novel. The previous chapter had dealt with Lettie's twenty first birthday party that ends significantly:

This was a gap between today and tomorrow, a dreary gap, where one sat and looked at the dreary comedy of yesterdays, and the grey tragedies of dawning tomorrows, vacantly, missing the poignancy of an actual today...

At last Leslie tore himself away, and after more returns for a farewell kiss, mounted the carriage, which stood in a pool of yellow light, blurred and splotched with shadows, and drove away, calling something about tomorrow.²⁰

The end of the chapter where the snowdrops occur leaves Lettie in a similar state and her strengthening association with Leslie Tempest and dissociation from George appears as the unacknowledged cause for the gap in her life as she moves into adulthood. The discussion in the woods therefore could unearth vital facts:

'What do they mean, do you think?' said Lettie in a low voice,

20. The White Peacock, p. 145.

as her white fingers touched the flowers, and her black furs fell on them.

'There are not so many this year,' said Leslie.

'They remind me of mistletoe, which is never ours, though we wear it,' said Emily to me.

'What do you think they say - what do they make you think, Cyril?' Lettie repeated.

'I don't know. Emily says they belong to some old wild lost religion. They were the symbol of tears, perhaps, to some strange-hearted Druid folk before us.'

'More than tears,' said Lettie. 'More than tears, they are so still. Something out of an old religion, that we have lost. They make me feel afraid.'

'What should you have to fear?' asked Leslie.

'If I knew, I shouldn't fear,' she answered. 'Look at all the snowdrops' - they hung in dim, strange flecks among the dusky leaves - 'look at them - closed up, retreating, powerless. They belong to some knowledge we have lost, that I have lost and that I need. I feel afraid. They seem like something in fate. Do you think, Cyril, we can lose things off the earth - like mastodons, and those old monstrosities - but things that matter - wisdom?'

'It is against my creed,' said I.

'I believe I have lost something,' said she.

'Come,' said Leslie, 'don't trouble with fancies.'²¹

Here Cyril as the augur or interpreter has little to offer, and Emily less. To Lettie the snowdrops are more than tears and arouse fear, while Leslie remains factual. Had their 'trouble with fancies' become more exploratory, Lettie might have grasped her position, but the general drift of the novel after this point confirms her in a life with Leslie of comfortable avoidance of such questions, even though to her the experience is not fanciful and not dismissable but relevant to 'things that matter - wisdom'.

In the manuscript version the snowdrop passage remains largely unaltered. The snowdrops (sprinkled mystically) become simply 'scattered' and the bluebells more specifically 'barbaric' instead of in the manuscript 'magnificent'. Replacing 'We have lost their

21. The White Peacock, pp. 153-154.

meaning' the snowdrops 'bring feelings which cannot be analysed. Ironically this comment is more fitted for the published version for the unrevised manuscript shows greater effort to analyse the meaning of the scene in terms of images. In the published novel however it is the quality of description, not the analysis through images, which is strengthened: The manuscript shows much rewriting and confusion over the discussion passage:

'There isn't much room left on earth for them, I think. They seem like pure little worshippers driven into the last places. Nothing is so frail as purity and self-abnegation - it seems you must fight or die - virtue has no strength without the arm of flesh. Why - what is the matter?'

and/

'I don't know,' said Lettie. 'They make me feel so strange - pitiful - rather hopeless. Nuns at prayer.'

'Aye - that's it - worshipping death and helplessness - like poor sad nuns.'

'Cyril - the old ideals - and beliefs - the ether-eal things - they feel like this in me - retreating, - closed up, - with no power.'

'They must go - as you advance.'

22

The directness of the last statement and of Cyril's resolution:

'It seems you must fight or die' together with the emergent concepts such as 'self-abnegation' suggest thematic structure, while in the published version theme is minimised in favour of narrative description. Both passages contain a sense of the suppressed intensity of feeling, which makes the nun image a potent one, but neither are sustained to the point where Lettie discovers her own negated feelings sufficiently to act on them. Instead, image-making is handled nervously and self-consciously. Symbolism is kept to the area where it is felt by the characters to be remote but important, yet more important to 'strange-hearted Druid folk' than to themselves. Imaginative

22. Manuscript before revision.

response likewise becomes presented as effete, pretentious and emasculated, opposed in fact to the kind of values and way of life perceived in the character of the gamekeeper Annable.

Another of the novel's consciously symbolic passages occurs in the graveyard scene with Cyril, Annable and the white peacock and offers further evidence of the kind of revisions suggested by the letters. Annable, a late addition during the composition of the novel, was a man who 'scorned religion and all mysticism' and his influence on Cyril may account for Cyril's doubting attitude during the discussion in the wood and his mention of a 'creed'. Unlike other characters his imaginative response is other than that informed by nostalgia. Furthermore he is a man of action:

He spent his days sleeping, making intricate traps for weasels and men, putting together a gun, or doing ~~some~~ amateur forestry, cutting down timber, splitting it in logs for use in the hall, and planting young trees. When he thought, he reflected on the decay of mankind - the decline of the human race into folly and weakness and rottenness. 'Be a good animal, true to your animal instinct', was his motto. With all this, he was fundamentally very unhappy - and he made me also wretched.²³

Annable has suffered equally from a woman of refinement as George from Lettie yet he is more verbal and determined in his reactions than George. His dialect, and the thoughts expressed in it, are refreshing and fearless. But he is killed quickly and violently and his short appearance presented as an unhappy and ominous episode. After the second writing Lawrence told the horrified Jessie Chambers: 'He has to be there. Don't you see why? He makes a sort of balance. Otherwise it's too much one thing, too much me.'²⁴

23. The White Peacock, p. 173.

24. E.T. A Personal Record, p. 117.

As to George, Cyril is attracted to his opposite in Annable, and the balance created in many complex ways is one of opposites. But whereas Annable opposes the mysticism and nostalgia, which cripples the imaginative responses of each of the other characters, with a brutal outspokenness and bitter applause for 'animal instinct', a true balance would mean a resolution or marriage between the physical and imaginative emphases in experience. Annable's tale of his first wife Crystabel adds one more false marriage, in both senses of the word, to the novel. Like Lettie, Crystabel has a flirtation with works of art that encourages her to strike attitudes:

She began to affect Burne-Jones - or Waterhouse - it was Waterhouse - she was a lot like one of his women - Lady of Shalott, I believe. At any rate, she got souly, and I was her animal - son animal - son boeuf. 25

To adopt the spiritual mode alone, as Lawrence described it in his last essays, involves being a mere spectator of the world of experience, and the ensuing loss of contact or touch arising from this split gives 'The Lady of Shalott' a particular relevance as well as suggesting that the deformity concerned can apply to works of art as well as people. As a work of art itself The White Peacock shows Lawrence's fundamental sensitivity to such problems but fails to evolve, in both style and narrative, ways in which the deformity can be surpassed and healed. It remains as a tragic effect.

As in earlier scenes, imaginative response to objects or events in the outer world is heralded by lengthy description. Cyril first enters a church near where he and Annable later witness the white peacock. The manuscript shows much toning down of 'metaphoric

fancy' in the description of the church. An opening phrase 'Impelled by a morbid melancholy, I entered' was deleted from the manuscript. This would certainly have devalued the experience in the eyes of the gamekeeper whose presence can be felt in this scene as an influence against the yearning mysticism and fanciful attitudes found elsewhere. The picture of 'entombed squires stirring in their vaults' as Cyril imagines them on hearing the scream of the peacock is rewritten with a tightening sense of actualities. Phrases such as 'seemed to' or 'I could fancy...' are similarly used to modify the following detail

The sound startled the drunken old headstones, shivered in the old grey grass, frightening the smothered primroses and violets that gasped, pale and weak, under the shrouding grass.

(Manuscript before revision)

The sound tore the dark ^{vail}~~sanctuary~~ of twilight. The old grey grass seemed to stir, and I could fancy that smothered primroses and violets beneath it waking and gasping for fear.

(Revisions to manuscript, and published version.)

The keeper looked at me and smiled. He nodded his head towards the peacock, saying:

'Hark at that damned thing!'

Again the bird lifted its crested head and gave a cry, at the same time turning awkwardly on its ugly legs, so that it showed us the full wealth of its tail glimmering like a stream of coloured stars over the sunken face of the angel.

(Manuscript left unrevised, and published version.)

Perched on an angel, too, like any damned proud woman. It's enough to make you believe in reincarnations - that's a proud woman - or its the devils

(Manuscript before revision)

'The proud fool! - look at it! Perched on an angel, too, as if it were a pedestal for vanity. That's the soul of a woman - or it's the devil.'

(Revisions to manuscript, and publishing version.)²⁶

Of these five passages, only the third is common to both the unrevised manuscript and the published novel, and this is the least metaphorical. As narrative and plain description it remained unaltered. Attention has already been drawn to the hallucinatory effects in the early poems as solidly visualised objects melt in the imaginative light playing upon them.²⁷ The literary language of novels however has to appease the principal demands of realism to maintain credibility. Lawrence was careful to present the novel's central symbol without lyrical falsification. Annable is not asking us to believe that proud women habitually squat on angels or that reincarnation is part of his creed. Manhood used as a pedestal for vanity, however, articulately overcomes this difficulty. As before, alterations are found where images or symbols are generated from initial observations, and the surroundings grow animated by an emotional charge.

Annable's brief appearance has a strengthening influence, adding depth to the narrative and tightness to the style. The discussions between himself and Cyril after the encounter with the peacock and as a direct result of it, show how imaginative thought can illuminate inner patterns within human relationships, and this is achieved as, provoked by his sight of the peacock, Annable gives a coherent account of his life history. The process of thought from observa-

27. In the first passage, Cyril's perceptions are hallucinatory and his impressions are poetic. These are modified in revision.

tion to conclusion is achieved here despite the presence of a reporter/narrator that creates difficulties elsewhere. Had further exploration of the areas touched on by Annable spread to involve the central characters in imaginative analysis of their relationships then not only might they have achieved positive resolutions but Lawrence himself gained quickly in understanding what came to be his goal - the relationship between men and women. After Annable's violent death in the quarry Cyril watches his funeral and there follow long passages of landscape description in which the natural world once more gains predominance and the valley of Nethermere is seen as a place 'full of sunshine and eternal forgetfulness'.²⁸ In giving way easily to his nostalgia the narrator obliterates the deeper and darker resonance given to the story by Annable. From the chapter that follows, tension and fateful decision increase with renewed force and the gap between Lettie and George and their true feelings widens beyond recovery.

III

'Never mind about the damned notice. I want her more than anything. -And the more I look at these naked lines, the more I want her. It's a sort of fine sharp feeling, like these curved lines. I don't know what I'm saying - but do you think she'd have me? Has she seen these pictures?'

'No.'

'If she did perhaps she'd want me - I mean she'd feel it clear and sharp coming through her.'

'I'll show her and see.'

'I'd been sort of thinking about it - since father had that notice. It seemed as if the ground was pulled from under our feet. I never felt so lost. Then I began to think of her, if she'd have me - but not clear, till you showed me those pictures. I must have her if I can - and I must have something.'

28. The White Peacock, p. 185.

It's rather ghostish to have the road suddenly smudged out, and all the world anywhere, nowhere for you to go. I must get something sure soon, or else I feel as if I should fall from somewhere and hurt myself. I'll ask her.²⁹

Lettie is already arranging her wedding with Leslie, but in this exciting passage George experiences a quickening of desire and purpose. The first sentence refers to the Saxton family's notice to quit their farm, but the 'ghostish' feeling of 'the road suddenly smudged out' is offset by the 'fine sharp feeling...clear and sharp' that George gains from the pictures by Beardsley, and which, as previously with the Clausen landscape, widen beyond the framework of the picture to the relevant emotion in his own life. His response has more decisive effects than previous contact with art images, and though Lettie is not present at the time he arranges with Cyril to meet her in the wood that evening. Anxiety over the validity of 'Atlanta' and 'Salome' is voiced by Cyril:

I sat and looked and my soul leaped out upon the new thing. I was bewildered, wondering, grudging, fascinated. I looked a long time, but my mind, or my soul, would come to no state of coherence. I was fascinated and overcome, yet full of stubbornness and resistance.³⁰

The test on Lettie and George, however, will be how far they allow themselves to pursue this new imaginative stimulus to the resolution of feeling it suggests. What of importance has been left out by the pictures becomes a pertinent question for the development of the narrative. For once, an image of 'real dynamic value'³¹ has been located in the pictures, but whether this image remains a strong force

29. The White Peacock, pp. 187-8.

30. Ibid. p. 186.

31. Apocalypse, p. 50.

despite the ensuing disruption of Nethermere, and one relevant to adult experience, depends on the attitude of George and Lettie to their social compatibility or incompatibility, to how far Lettie persists in seeing George as childish and barbarian, and to what extent George is able to maintain this new image of woman as the true equivalent for his emotions. The further question is whether the novelist has sufficient control over his characters and the theme of the story to be able to present them with moral and aesthetic clarity.

The earlier questions are not answered finally until after Lettie and Leslie have quarrelled and Lettie grown almost able to accept George after her first refusal. Leslie then has a motor accident and commands Lettie's sympathy while George remains unemonstrative. Eventually the proposal scene is renewed, again in the woods, redolent of their youthful intimacy, but by this time Lettie has grown too far away from George for his offer of marriage to be anything but a sentimental reminder of the past. Her real life now belongs to Leslie, within whose advantages of social accomplishment she has become entrapped. The Beardsley pictures are 'naked' of social trappings, of fashionable pose. Unlike the Pre-Raphaelite portraits mentioned so frequently in the novel and suggestive of melancholia and spiritual yearning, the sort of mysticism hated by Annable, they are elemental and direct. But neither Lettie nor, one suspects, Lawrence, can allow an uncluttered appeal to the senses to go uncensored by further considerations of refinement and class. These are adult values, while the sensual ones are merely adolescent. When Lettie has finished playing with her wedding finery she goes to meet George in the woods. Commenting

on her appearance George remarks 'I'd thought about it differently-like some pictures... not all that soft stuff - plainer.'³² Lettie trails silk skirts and is hurriedly rather out of place in the elemental scene he had imagined. He awkwardly but urgently asks her to marry him and live in Canada, a farmer's wife: 'But you know it's impossible - look how I'm fixed' she replies. Lettie confirms the ominous impression Cyril had had of George when showing him 'Atlanta' earlier that day. He is: 'dreamy and boyish ...as if he had been drinking.'³³ thus suggesting, as so many times before, that George's responses and impulses are somehow quaint, rural, in the past, futureless, and not to be taken seriously. The reductive attitude of the characters towards George is directly linked with the evaluation of his imaginative response, with the features that complicate such evaluation, such as social refinement and maturity, inviting the conclusion that in The White Peacock Lawrence had not been able to rid his own attitude of ambivalence.

George's proposal has a delayed effect on Lettie. She hardly speaks to Leslie when they next meet and distracts herself by playing the piano. The morning after he stays the night in their house she feels, for some unspecified reason, disgusted and not herself. Later she visits George, to no effect, and after Leslie's accident all is lost. During this time, which stretches over two chapters, we are given little but the slightest hints of her feelings until finally she once more meets George in the woods. The long passages of description of Sam and the chaotic Annable household at this crucial time when Lettie's thoughts are determining the course of

32. The White Peacock, p. 193.

33. Ibid. p. 188.

several futures leads inevitably to the conclusion that Lawrence was consistently avoiding her thoughts as much as she was herself.

George Ford's interpretation of The White Peacock explains that George and Lettie try 'to cross over to each other's side of the spectrum [of dark to light, Pluto to Persephone]'.³⁴ But however darkly George may be classified in the novel, he shows no lack of that imaginative sensitiveness that really distinguishes the dark from the light figures in Lawrence's works. Ford's suggestions beg the question of whether Lawrence at this stage clearly understood the distinctions he explored in his mature works, and whether the novel can be read as more than a vague introduction to them. In the Beardley episodes, George emphasises the future, not the past, as a setting for his relationship with Lettie. He tries to imagine a new meeting between them both where the old conflict no longer dominates. But in the wood scene she forces him once more to consider himself a figure of sentimentality. Nature offers the harmony of a complete world, to be broken only by the human beings who must part and travel beyond, who together can only relive the glamorous past:

The wood was high and warm. Along the ridings the forget-me-nots were knee deep, stretching, glimmering into the distance like the Milky Way through the night. They left the tall, flower-tangled paths to go in among the bluebells, breaking through the close-pressed flowers and ferns till they came to an oak which had fallen across the hazels, where they sat half screened. The hyacinths drooped magnificently with an overweight of purple, or they stood pale and erect, like unripe ears of purple corn. Heavy bees swung down in a blunder of extravagance among the purple flowers. They were intoxicated even with the sight of so much blue. The sound of their hearty, wanton humming came clear upon the solemn boom of the wind overhead. The sight of their clinging, clambering riot gave satis-

34. George Ford, Double Measure, (1965). p. 49.

faction to the soul. A rosy campion flower caught the sun and shone out. An elm sent down a shower of flesh-tinted sheaths upon them...

'If you were a faun, I would put guelder roses round your hair, and make you look Baccanalian.' She left her hand lying on his knee, and looked up at the sky. Its blue looked pale and green in comparison with the purple tide ebbing about the wood. The clouds rose up like towers, and something had touched them into beauty, and poised them up among the winds. The clouds passed on, and the pool of sky was clear.

'Look,' she said, 'now we are netted down - boughs with knots of green buds. If we were free on the winds! - But I'm glad we're not.' She turned suddenly to him, and with the same movement, she gave him her hand, and he clasped it in both his,³⁵

This passage is remarkable for its well controlled richness and accuracy of description, but it is descriptive and not analytical, and leaves the lovers almost in the background. Lettie's comment on the wind overhead indicates nevertheless that she is reading the signs, and the twofold aspect of the external world, of safety and changeless enrichment below, and of fleeting freedom above and beyond, mirrors the conflict momentarily buried between them, an underlying hopelessness. This metaphysical use of weather and landscape is the closest Lawrence comes to analysis. 'In shelter the heat was passionate, but in the open the wind scattered its fire,' the narrator remarks at the opening of this chapter. 'Look at that cloud-face - see - gazing right up into the sky. The lips are opening - he is telling us something - now the form is slipping away - it's gone - come, we must go too.'³⁶ These words of Lettie's are direct divinations, but not so much inquisitive as resigned, when it is too late, to a fate she hardly desires. Had her imagination not only perceived wisdom after the event, the process of image-thought used so effectively in the following speech may have

35. The White Peacock, p. 247.

36. Ibid. p. 248.

served to alter the facts of the story and avert their lives from tragedy:

'The threads of my life were untwined; they drifted about like floating threads of gossamer; and you didn't put out your hand to take them and twist them up into the chord with yours. Now another has caught them up, and the chord of my life is being twisted, and I cannot wrench it free and untwine it again - I can't. I am not strong enough. Besides, you have twisted another thread far and tight into your chord; could you get free?

'Tell me what to do - yes, if you tell me.'

'I can't tell you - so let me go.'³⁸

Resignation is coupled in this case with sentimentality. Lettie's way of seeing George has not altered since her patronising description of him as: 'son animal'. His of her has attempted serious development only to encounter her resistance. He is still Bacchus to her, and this flippancy is the bulwark of her denial, as well as the seeming proof of her refinement. But since her education inhibits rather than fosters true thinking and right action, and true thinking belongs more to George than herself, we must conclude that Lawrence at this time was deeply confused about such matters. If we ask on what is her refinement founded, the answer would be on books and pictures, the value of which the novelist himself is highly dubious about. Ambivalence could be more a necessity than a fault yet several scenes leave a sense that the roots of the conflict between imaginative and physical drives have been but superficially exposed.

One assumption is that George will always be incapable of response to adult society life and that culturally he is still a child. Lettie arranges a pre-wedding picnic with her friends, in

38. The White Peacock, p. 248.

the fields of George's farm, and he accepts her invitation with reserve. For all their high education little response is shown to the attractive reality of George's presence. Freddy Cresswell's 'whimsical affection of vulgarity...flickered with fantasy' and Miss D'Arcy in her ironic innocence remarks: 'Oh you don't know what a classical pastoral person you are - but there, I don't suppose you suffer from the idyllic love... Do you find much time to sport with Amaryllis in the shade?'³⁷ George has little place in the party except as a sentimental object of antique, quaint interest, more like a farm animal than a human being, and with about as much chance of success in adult society. As in the early poems, youthfulness receives a hostile reception from city life. In the city adult society appears at the peak of confusion and unfamiliarity. Cyril and George attempt to forge a kind of artistic coherence from the 'stupendous poetry' of London at night. London, like the Beardsley pictures, produces intense feelings in Cyril of challenge and resistance. The exhilaration of freedom combines with his dread of change, and his nostalgia for Nethermere, and since this creates a thematic resonance with Lettie's attitude to George as a sentimental and nostalgic figure, Cyril's own attempt to find glamour in his future environment is of great importance. The following paragraphs express three critical phases in his response to the new environment of adult life:

I suffered acutely the sickness of exile in Norwood. For weeks I wandered the streets of the suburb, haunted by the spirit of some part of Nethermere. As I went along the quiet roads where the lamps in yellow loneliness stood among the leafless trees of the night I would feel the feeling of the dark, wet bit of path

37. The White Peacock, p. 264-6.

between the wood meadow and the brooks...

I could never lift my eyes save to the Crystal Palace, crouching, cowering wretchedly among the yellow-grey clouds, pricking up its two round towers like pillars of anxious misery. No landmark could have been more foreign to me, more depressing, than the great dilapidated palace which lay forever prostrate above us, fretting because of its own degradation and ruin...³⁹

In the mornings I loved to move in the aimless street's procession, watching the faces come near to me, with the sudden glance of dark eyes, watching the mouths of the women blossom with talk as they passed, watching the subtle movements of the shoulders of men beneath their coats, and the naked warmth of their necks that went glowing along the streets. I loved the city intensely for its movement of men and women, the soft, fascinating flow of the limbs of men and women, and the sudden flash of eyes and lips as they pass.⁴⁰

In these excerpts the surroundings are seen according to the effect they produce on the imaginative consciousness of the observer. As such they amount to deeper analysis than that offered by 'plain description and narrative' and resemble the style found in the early poems. In the third paragraph verbal resemblances are also apparent. Taken together they denote change and adjustment.

The 'wet bit of path between the wood, meadows and the brooks' is made more real by memory than the actual streets in which the memory takes place. In the same way Lettie chooses to ignore the real George for the one coloured by memory. In the second paragraph the actual streets gain greater prominence and begin to be observed. As in the poems certain details in the surroundings focus the attention and the feelings of the observer; in this case feelings of hollowness and isolation, are transferred onto the

3.9. The White Peacock, pp. 298. - 299

40. Ibid. p. 302.

object. The emotional transference enables the observer to realise what he is feeling with a subsequent increase of self-awareness. In the third paragraph the narrator has overcome the complications of memory and surpasses the feelings of 'degradation and ruin' that its aura has inflicted upon the surroundings. There follows a new openness to the new experience the strange environment has to offer, and a perception in that environment itself of the freshness and vitality Cyril needs in order to maintain his response.⁴¹ Cyril's response to London as expressed here forms, together perhaps with Emily's marriage to Tom Renshaw, one of the more optimistic elements of the story, whose general drift maintains the loss of Nethermere as an issue of unprevented misery and tragedy. If the three paragraphs above represent three stages in the development of response, Lettie's response to George - and at a period of most crucial decisions in her life - remains fixed and crippled, ignorant of further possibilities.

On beginning his first novel Lawrence declared to Jessie Chambers that in the manner of George Eliot 'the usual plan is to take two couples and develop their relationships... Anyhow, I don't want a plot, I should be bored with it. I shall try two couples for a start.'⁴² He also remarked that George Eliot had been first to start 'putting all the action inside [of the characters]'.⁴³

41. E.T.A. Personal Record, p. 151. 'On his second day in Croydon Lawrence sent me a letter that gave me a shock. It was like a howl of terror... [But] the phase of Lawrence's homesickness soon wore off. He settled down to the third writing of The White Peacock and began to explore London; and to write about the lights that flowered when darkness came.' Lawrence's own change of reaction, as described above, closely resembles Cyril's in The White Peacock.

42. E.T.A. A Personal Record, p. 103.

43. Ibid. p. 105.

These comments are helpful, for plot, in a Lawrence novel, The White Peacock being no exception, develops according to each character's way of seeing, and each way of seeing makes them responsible for what happens to them. Their response, as in the poems, can be taken as no less than the prime motive force determining the story. After visiting Lettie's married home in London with George, Cyril concludes: 'To be responsible for the good progress of one's life is terrifying. It is the most insufferable form of loneliness, and the heaviest of responsibilities.'⁴⁴ To be thus responsible involves acting upon the coherence one personally makes of life, and in avoiding therefore neither contact with life, however disruptive this may be, nor the search for coherence. In being so conscious of such problems, Lawrence constantly burdens his sensitive characters with a responsibility that is essentially an artistic one, essentially exploratory and self-revealing. In The White Peacock the strong interest in art images is not insignificant, nor are the frequent instances of environmental change, where new evidence of life calls forth feelings of disruption. In London Lawrence is less able to keep the merely descriptive interest he had indulged when dealing with the natural world of Nethermere where no disruption exists. Ways of seeing, imaginative response and artistic coherence dominate the London episodes towards the end of the novel. What so often matters to Cyril and George about London is its artistic intelligibility:

He [George] sat looking with heavy eyes, seeming to shrink from the enormous unintelligible lettering of the poem of London.⁴⁵

44. The White Peacock, p. 324.

45. Ibid. p. 326.

Again, when they hear a socialist speaker at Hyde Park, 'the little man's' way of seeing threatens to disrupt the one which Cyril is struggling to preserve for himself. Cyril's desire for an integrated view of life makes 'the unending miseries of the poor' difficult to accommodate, difficult precisely because he is sensitive to them:

At the Marble Arch Corner we listened to a little socialist who was flaring fiercely under a plane tree. The hot stream of his words flowed over the old wounds that the knowledge of the unending miseries of the poor had given me, and I winced. For him the world was all East-end, and all the East-end was as a pool from which the waters are drained off, leaving the water-things to wrestle in the wet mud under the sun, till the whole of the city seems a heaving shuddering struggle of black-mudded objects deprived of the elements of life. I felt a great terror of the little man, lest he should make me see all mud, as I had seen before.⁴⁶

Lawrence himself could not achieve the integral unity of vision which Cyril desires until he had thoroughly explored how these ideas, moral and political as well as of course artistic, all fitted together. But in The White Peacock the terms, often confused as they are show how the problem of integration first presented itself to Lawrence as an artistic one:

Closed together in the same blue flames, we discovered and watched the pageant of life in the town revealed wonderfully to us. We laughed at the tyranny of old romance. We scorned the faded procession of old years, and made mock of the vast pilgrimage of by-gone romances travelling farther into the dim distance. Were we not in the midst of the bewildering pageant of modern life, with all its confusion of bannerets and colours, with its infinite interweaving of sounds, the screech of the modern toys of haste striking like keen spray, the heavy boom of busy mankind gathering its bread, earnestly, forming the bed of all other sounds; and between these two the swiftness of songs, the triumphant tilt of the joy of life, the hoarse oboes of privation, the shuddering drums of tragedy, and the eternal scraping of the two deep-toned strings of despair?

46. The White Peacock, p. 321.

We watched the taxicabs coursing with their noses down to the street, we watched the rocking hansoms, and the lumbering stateliness of buses. In the silent green cavern of the park we stood and listened to the surging of the ocean of life.⁴⁷

The metaphors have an exploratory purpose in trying to estimate the differences and similarities between past experience and that of the present, and the passage is flavoured with a good deal of imagery of art - music and pageants. The final sentence resembles the language of the early poems. They stand in the 'green cavern', a prelude to real immersion.⁴⁸ They also find outcast beggars sleeping under Waterloo Bridge, and Cyril like Lawrence in the poems suffers pity and remorse on slipping a coin into a woman's hand. But though there are encouraging signs that the latter parts of the novel show that more selection has gone into the choice of incidents, a tendency to mannerism and 'metaphoric fancy' still persists, and the revisions, by allowing such phrases as 'the hoarse oboes of privation' to remain, still indicate great uncertainty and lack of confidence in the novelist's use of imaginative language.

This chapter has attempted to show how in The White Peacock style and the direction of the plot are interdependent, and that a style which allowed deeper exploration of feeling in the human relationships presented would have overcome many of the novel's weaknesses and confusions. Though this may be expecting too much all at once from a first novel it is justifiable if it helps to clarify, finally, Lawrence's progress towards a successful imaginative style and towards moral and artistic confidence. Even though in the letters Lawrence argued that 'slight incidents should dis-

47. The White Peacock, p. 320.

48. See Complete Poems, p. 869. 'Scripture'.

play character, not fine speeches' the sheer number of slight incidents often obscures character, while serious imaginative responses fail to develop to full potential. Lawrence's attitude to works of art and to the high degree of consciousness assumed to belong to educated people of the upper classes also shows that the problems he did come to explore deeply in Sons and Lovers he only attempted superficially in The White Peacock. Mrs. Morel is a woman whose capacity for imaginative response and for self-analysis and realisation commands the novelist's profound attention, while her husband exemplifies her opposite. Only by direct treatment of the theme emerging between these two could Lawrence progress beyond The White Peacock, and as one reviewer concluded, its 'unedited transcript of life'.⁴⁹

49. Allan Monkhouse, Manchester Guardian, 8th February 1911. See also D.H. Lawrence, The Critical Heritage, ed . Draper. p. 34.

CHAPTER THREE: Sons and Lovers

The imagery of the streaming moonlight is that of a vast torrential force, magnificent and inhuman, and it equates not only with that phallic power of which Mrs Morel is the rebellious vessel but with the greater and universal demiurge that was anciently called Eros - the power springing in plants and hurling the planets, giving the glistening great rhubarb leaves their fierce identity, fecundating and stretching the lilies. The smear of yellow pollen on Mrs Morel's face is a grossly humorous irony. This passage is a typifying instance of the spontaneous identification Lawrence constantly found between image and meaning, between real things and what they symbolise.¹

I shall begin this discussion of Sons and Lovers with an examination of the scene referred to by Dorothy Van Ghent in which Mrs. Morel finds consolation in the moonlit evening and the mysterious lilies after being forced out of the house by her husband. In her essay Miss Van Ghent assumes Sons and Lovers to be a statement in narrative terms of Lawrence's: 'controlling sense of the characterful integrity of objects' that issues as the: 'spontaneous identification...between image and meaning', and that: 'in truly seeing (objects) as they are, (Lawrence) sees through them to what they mean.'² She assumes that as far as the conflict in the novel is concerned Lawrence is fully aware of a solution, that his sympathies are with certain characters against others, that the novel in short is a decisive statement and not an exploratory one. The purpose of this chapter will be to argue for the second, and to show how and why the exploration constituted a distinct advance in Lawrence's fictional technique.

1. Dorothy Van Ghent. 'On Sons and Lovers', The English Novel, (1953), p. 249.
2. Ibid. pp. 256, 249, 251.

Miss Van Ghent's assumption leaves many questions unanswered. Why for example does Lawrence condone Mrs. Morel's condemnation of the father? Why again should Paul be attracted to, as well as repelled by, Miriam's: 'blasphemous possessorship which denies the separateness of living entities'?³ Jessie Chambers believed that if Lawrence in Sons and Lovers were: 'able to treat the theme with strict integrity he would thereby walk into freedom.'⁴ But on reading the second draft of the novel she maintained that Lawrence had: 'handed his mother the laurels of victory.'⁵ Dorothy Van Ghent adopts the hero's view of Miriam to support her own arguments. But the view of Miriam, which Jessie Chambers objected to, and by which Miriam is defeated, is largely derived from Mrs. Morel, as a result of her power over Paul, and Dorothy Van Ghent therefore is forced to agree with Mrs. Morel while seeing her influence as a destructive one. Clearly, Miss Van Ghent's organisation of the characters' values and reactions is helpful only up to a certain point. Beyond that, one must question her assumption that Lawrence knew exactly what he was doing in Sons and Lovers, and that he was, as a result, determined to reveal the mother's influence as one her sons ought seriously to have avoided.

In Germany Lawrence revised the manuscript of Paul Morel a second time. He sent Jessie a postcard saying: 'I am going through Paul Morel. I am sorry it has turned out as it has', and finally a letter and the proofs of Sons and Lovers. In each version Lawrence's allegiance to his mother in Mrs. Morel and denial

3. Dorothy Van Ghent. 'On Sons and Lovers', The English Novel, (1953), p. 256.
4. E.T. A Personal Record, p. 192.
5. Ibid.

of any other allegiance caused Jessie great distress. Unfortunately but understandably the proofs were not gratefully received and though she read only some pages she found 'both the story and the mood alike unchanged'.⁶ For Lawrence to condemn Mrs. Morel as Dorothy Van Ghent would have him do would require a shift of attitude that did not take place until after Sons and Lovers. His main purpose had been one of presentation and exploration, the thoroughness of which enabled him to explain to himself many autobiographical facts and prepare the ground for a later attitude to develop. With this direct treatment the neglected issues of The White Peacock are now clarified, and the nature of imaginative response, as it functioned in the early poems, more fully examined.

The scene in the garden at the end of the first chapter of Sons and Lovers constitutes one such thorough examination. Previous confrontations between Gertrude and Walter Morel have led up to it. The story of her marriage is given as one in which she gradually learns what kind of man she has married. In a sequence of scenes she swiftly emerges from being burdened by her surroundings into a clarity of realisation, in which her inquisitive imagination works on certain events in her circumstances and in her marriage to bring them to knowledge. The 'decided positive' of Mrs. Morel's mind begins to record and accumulate consistent impressions of distaste. She begins to question herself:

Mrs Morel was alone, but she was used to it. Her son and her little girl slept upstairs; so, it seemed, her home was there behind her, fixed and stable. But she felt wretched with the coming child...There she stood, trying to soothe herself with

6. E.T. A Personal Record, p. 220. Postcard from Waldbröl, Collected Letters, p. 127.

the scent of flowers and the fading, beautiful evening...She seemed so far away from her girlhood, she wondered if it were the same person walking heavily up the back garden at the Bottoms as had run so lightly on the breakwater at Sheerness ten years before.

'What have I to do with it?' she said to herself. 'What have I to do with all this? Even the child I am going to have! It doesn't seem as if I were taken into account.'⁷

Mrs. Morel goes into the garden at moments of contemplation, and in contact with nature finds momentary release from her circumstances. The garden and the evening sky seem to help her to resolve the conflict through a sense of perspective. This, and the ensuing questions suggest that poetic cast of mind already evident in Lawrence himself. She too draws on previous experiences in order to evaluate those of the present, as with her memory of Sheerness. Lawrence explains this contemplative urgency in her as the essential, initial reason for her attraction to Morel:

Therefore the dusky, golden softness of this man's sensuous flame of life, that flowed off his flesh like the flame from a candle, not baffled and gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit as her life was, seemed to her something wonderful, beyond her.⁸

Their incompatibility becomes dramatised, however, by instances of being: 'baffled and gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit' in action. Though stimulated by the domestic burden, such moments frequently take place outside her husband's house. Morel's clumsy cropping of William's hair, in which she had taken ~~so much~~ pride, strikes her as a too typical instance of his thoughtlessness and insensitivity. The act 'had caused something momentous to take place in her soul'.⁹ The style appears to condone her judgement

7. Sons and Lovers, pp. 12-13.

8. Ibid. p. 18.

9. Ibid. p. 25.

because it faithfully records each successive impression of her husband she receives, thus exploring and explaining their incompatibility. It is a style based primarily upon imaginative response and so is unfitted at this stage to present the presumably unconscious reactions of Morel to her isolation from him. The only occasions where his reactions are described are those when the conflict erupts into violence, and can be depicted as narrative.

During the domestic argument preceding Mrs. Morel's being thrown out of the house Morel is presented simply as a physical force. It is she who interprets his actions, and, in the light of her previous interpretations, can see them in one way only:

Just then Morel came in. He had been very jolly in the Nelson, but coming home had grown irritable. He had not quite got over the feeling of irritability and pain, after having slept on the ground when he was so hot; and a bad conscience afflicted him as he neared the house. He did not know he was angry. But when the garden-gate resisted his attempts to open it, he kicked it and broke the latch. He entered just as Mrs. Morel was pouring the infusion of herbs out of the saucepan. Swaying slightly, he lurched against the table. The boiling liquor pitched. Mrs. Morel started back.

'Good gracious,' she cried, 'coming home in his drunkenness!'

'Comin' home in his what?' he snarled, his hat over his eye.¹⁰

This passage presents Morel's feelings as incoherent and he unaware of them. This may be one reason why Lawrence spends little effort to develop Morel's side of things, as distinct from the disproportionate amount of time and space given to Mrs. Morel's in the garden afterwards. With The Rainbow Lawrence had developed a style more suited than here to express emotion from which self-awareness is absent.

During the inevitable confrontation resulting from Morel's

10. Sons and Lovers, p. 32.

entry Lawrence concentrates on the surface appearance of violence: the clenched fists, the suffocating lungs, the: 'shaking into tears' and: 'drying into rage', the head: 'bursting full of blood'. Only one sentence: 'He was afraid of her', explores beyond the surface. Otherwise, description and dialogue are used to present the visible and audible evidence of conflict. Physically and morally aroused, Mrs. Morel is driven immediately in the lull, to an imaginative pitch of thought. Both her expulsion into the cold yard and wide night, and her experience there are caused by the weight of physical violence pushing her out. The violence represents an extreme form of the overpowering circumstances that previously forced her into an imaginative response, and though painful in its context she accepts such response as a kind of release, a recovery of her previous self, of the person she was before her marriage. Outside the house she relives the scene with Morel, and her mind: 'picks out certain factors which shall represent the image seen':^{10a}

She walked down the garden path, trembling in every limb, while the child boiled within her. For a while she could not control her consciousness; mechanically she went over the last scene, then over it again, certain phrases, certain moments coming each time like a brand red-hot down on her soul; and each time she enacted again the past hour, each time the brand came down at the same points, till the mark was burnt in, and the pain burnt out, and at last she came to herself.¹¹

We can already surmise from previous occasions what she thought; this passage gives an account of how her thought-process worked. Lawrence uses the word 'mechanically' and is, in effect, describ-

10a. See Introduction, note 19.

11. Sons and Lovers, p. 34.

ing the mechanics of imaginative response.¹² Similarly he goes on to present her subsequent lapse, her anger resolved, into a feeling of intense peace. Far from being excluded from the natural forces apparent in the streaming moonlight and the extravagant presense of the lilies, she is in harmony with them now:

...Herself melted out like scent into the shiny, pale air. After a time the child, too, melted with her in the mixing-pot of moonlight, and she rested with the hills and lilies and houses, all swum together in a kind of swoon.¹³

In her essay Dorothy Van Ghent remarks: 'Lawrence's great gift for the symbolic image was a function of his sensitivity to and passion for the meaning of real things - for the individual expression that real forms have.'^{13a} It would be a mistake nevertheless to interpret the symbolism of Sons and Lovers by any rule which neglected that: 'the meaning of real things' is their meaning to the character with whom they are in real contact. In the quoted passage at the beginning of this chapter, Dorothy Van Ghent goes on to do just this. Back indoors, Mrs. Morel: 'smiled faintly to see her face all smeared with the yellow dust of lilies'. Miss Van Ghent sees this smear of pollen as: 'a grossly humorous irony'. But it is by ascertaining how Mrs. Morel saw it that any attention to symbolism can best be rewarded. In view of the previous scene, and of the cast of mind through which she was accustomed to order and understand her experience, Mrs. Morel appears to be relieved, even thankful, that despite her circumstances such an encounter with the

12. At this stage, 'mechanically' had not acquired any derogatory overtones in Lawrence's fiction. He uses the word later when describing Paul's behaviour after his mother's death.

13. Sons and Lovers, p. 35.

13a. Dorothy Van Ghent. The English Novel, p. 248.

beautiful evening is still possible.

It is questionable whether any interpretation of the symbolic meaning of such scenes in Sons and Lovers can go further than this without overriding the special significance in each instance of a character's response to his or her surroundings or to others. Even though certain kinds of response do emerge, the pattern they form has to be reassessed in each scene if it is not to be oversimplified. Lawrence's obvious interest in Mrs. Morel has now been made apparent, not only by the amount of space and attention devoted to her thoughts but also by the fact that her way of seeing and her capacity for self-exploration closely resembles that possessed by Lawrence himself, as found first in his early poems. Not only does she occupy the central position in the first half of the book but a great deal of dramatic weight is attached to her estimation of characters making a later appearance. One other conclusive scene from the first half, when she takes her new-born baby onto the cricket field one evening, serves to establish her at that centre while being disputably Lawrence's most thorough rendering in prose so far, of imaginative response.

II

With Mrs. Morel it was one of those still moments when the small frets vanish, and the beauty of things stands out, and she had the peace and the strength to see herself. Now and again, a swallow cut close to her. Now and again, Annie came up with a handful of alder-currants. The baby was restless on his mother's knee, clambering with his hands at the light.¹⁴

14. Sons and Lovers, p. 50.

Previous to this passage, Lawrence had set the scene in which Mrs. Morel: 'fronted the evening'. In so doing he practised his own advice to Louise Burrows in 1910 to: 'Gather the picture - get the essentials for description - present to the eye'.¹⁵ He presents the landscape with a careful appropriateness of the words for the seen world in sentences as simple and precise as: 'Mary rooks...came cawing home across the softly woven sky...over a tree-clump that made a dark boss in the pasture'. But the particular 'eye' in this case is that of Mrs. Morel and Lawrence does not stop, as previously in The White Peacock, with descriptive formulations that fail to develop the observer's imaginative reactions. Here, they lead up to something. The moment, as in earlier scenes, is one of contemplative renewal for Mrs. Morel. As before, the 'small frets' have vanished; all we are told of them is that: 'Morel had kicked William, and the mother would never forgive him'.

The way in which certain details gradually emerge as of special importance for her, as signs revealing an attendant emotion, mark the cricket field scene as a poetic passage. First, it is the child which confronts her by its hands: 'clambering at the light'. Almost imperceptibly her concentration on the child has been prepared for:

A few shocks of corn in a corner of the fallow stood up as if alive; she imagined them bowing; perhaps her son would be a Joseph.¹⁶

She is already thinking of him, almost without knowing, and the slight imaginative transfiguration of the corn-shocks into images delicately hints at the state of mind the evening has induced.

15. Boulton, Lawrence in Love, (1968), p. 49.

16. Sons and Lovers, p. 49.

Something in his appearance demands her concentration on the baby:

Mrs Morel looked down at him. She had dreaded this baby like a catastrophe, because of her feeling for her husband. And now she felt strangely towards the infant. Her heart was heavy because of the child, almost as if it were unhealthy, or malformed. Yet it seemed quite well. But she noticed the peculiar knitting of the baby's brows, and the peculiar heaviness of its eyes, as if it were trying to understand something that was pain. She felt, when she looked at her child's dark brooding pupils, as if a burden were on her heart.¹⁷

The style carefully interweaves thought with observation: 'She looked down at him...Yet it seemed quite well...But she noticed the peculiar knitting of the baby's brows, and the peculiar heaviness of its eyes, as if it were trying to understand...she looked at her child's dark brooding pupils...'. A moment later the eyes become 'clear, knowing' as if, as she had feared, it had been listening to her thoughts before it had been born, and is now ready to repeat those thoughts to her. The child's eyes are therefore the agent, the stimulus, but also the reflection of her imaginative response. Looking at them she realises her feeling:

And at that moment she felt, in some far inner place of her soul, that she and her husband were guilty...With all her force, with all her soul she would make up to it for having brought it into the world unloved. She would love it all the more now it was here; carry it in her love. Its clear, knowing eyes gave her pain and fear. Did it know all about her? When it lay under her heart, had it been listening then? Was there a reproach in the look? She felt the marrow melt in her bones, with fear and pain.¹⁸

Mrs. Morel questions the appearance to find an answer: 'Was there a reproach in the look?'. And even despite that appearance being again one of reproach and pain, the similarities between this

17. Sons and Lovers, p. 50.

18. Ibid. p. 50 - 51.

passage and the way of seeing, or rather the way of asking, in

'End of Another Home Holiday', are impressive:

Why is it the long slow stroke of the midnight bell
(Will it never finish the twelve?)
Falls again and again on my heart with a heavy reproach?²⁰

Mrs. Morel, unlike Lawrence in the poem, is able to make amends:

'She would love it all the more now, carry it in her love', but she has arrived at her decision by revealing to herself an emotion otherwise transferred to, and contained by, the object of her attention, in the same way as Lawrence did in his poetry. Equally, she too is confronted with dramatic and dynamic images that animate the feeling previously associated with the surroundings, in this case the image of the unborn child that she: 'dreaded like a catastrophe', listening to her thoughts.

She also realises that the child is of the same type as herself, so that when she thinks: 'What will he be?' her heart is anxious. Her mind continues to work in images beyond her control, to recognise omens or portents. She interprets her lifting the child towards the sun as an impulse: 'to give him back whence he came', and decides, unconsciously it seems, to call him Paul: 'she knew not why'. Comments could be made on the aptness of this name. The religious associations with revelation are clearer since 'Paul' was Mrs. Morel's father's favourite apostle. Paul's god-father is the clergyman Mr. Heaton, and Mrs. Morel had been engaged to a clergyman before her marriage. These facts are sufficient to associate Paul with the contemplative aspect of life, but to stress this through

these references alone would be to neglect the manifest nature of what this aspect means and how it works as explored and understood by Lawrence in the above scene. To enlighten Mrs. Morel on her choice of a name merely distracts attention from her type of awareness in a scene of crucial importance to any understanding of its function.

III

Discord in Childhood

Outside the house an ash-tree hung its terrible whips,
And at night when the wind rose, the lash of the tree
Shrieked and slashed the wind, as a ship's
Weird rigging in a storm shrieks hideously.

Within the house two voices arose, a slender lash
Whistling she-delirious rage, and the dreadful sound
Of a male thong booming and bruising, until it had drowned
The other voice in the silence of blood, 'neath the noise
of the ash.²¹

During one such incident as this poem describes, Morel flings a side-board drawer at his wife, and it cuts her face. The blood drips onto the baby she is holding and hangs in its hair. Lawrence's description of Morel watching fascinated as the blood congeals betrays sympathy and tenderness:

He was turning drearily away, when he saw a drop of blood fall from the averted wound into the baby's fragile, glistening hair. Fascinated he watched the heavy dark drop hang in the glistening cloud, and pull down the gossamer. Another drop fell. It would soak through to the baby's scalp. He watched, fascinated, feeling it soak in; then, finally, his manhood broke.

'What of this child?' was all his wife said to him.²²

21. Amores. A longer, illegible version of Discord in Childhood, is present in the Clarke Notebook, though omitted from the Complete Poems.

22. Sons and Lovers, p. 54.

Morel is on the point of realising such feelings of guilt as Mrs. Morel had acknowledged during the previous scene. But though alerted by the child as she had been he resists. Since Morel is on the way to it, however, Lawrence spends some time with his thoughts, a rare exception among scenes where he is simply treated by the novelist as an object of disgust. Lawrence much later came to regret this unfairness to his father, upon whom the character of Morel is based,²³ but it is quite obvious from his presentation that, at this stage, Lawrence had developed neither the interest in nor therefore the capacity for treating characters unable to realise or recognise their emotions imaginatively. That he was now able to deal with imaginative response coherently constitutes a step forward from The White Peacock but a style suited to the presentation of inarticulate feeling required a further clarification of his aesthetic and moral ideas achieved in later years. Walter Morel therefore, could only be depicted as a foil to his wife rather than as a personality or consciousness of equal value and interest in its own right. Also, in writing autobiography Lawrence is confined by the fact of his father's degeneration, and an image of his father he would have had great difficulty in forgetting. The novel is evidence of how far his mother had helped to imprint that image on the minds of her children. Morel remains an object on which the imagination works, rather than a medium through which it works, and this partly accounts for Mrs. Morel's disillusionment as well as for Lawrence's unfairness and neglect.

23. See 'Women are so cocksure', Phoenix, (1936), p. 168. 'When woman tries to be so much mistress of her fate, particularly of other people's fates, what a tragedy!'

Morel's failure to acknowledge his feelings of guilt after the violence done to his wife and child shows in what way he is presented as a foil only. Lawrence's sympathy, as expressed during the first intimations of imaginative response to the blood in the baby's hair, wanes as soon as Morel fails to let his feelings come forward. Morel refuses to think, and: 'tries to wriggle out of it', and Lawrence has no sympathy for a state of mind in which such refusal is possible:

Walter Morel lay in bed next day until nearly dinner-time. He did not think of the previous evening's work. He scarcely thought of anything, but he would not think of that. He lay and suffered like a sulking dog. He had hurt himself most; and he was the more damaged because he would never say a word to her, or express his sorrow. He tried to wriggle out of it. 'It was her own fault,' he said to himself. Nothing, however, could prevent his inner consciousness inflicting on him the punishment which ate into his spirit like rust, and which he could only alleviate by drinking...She would have felt sorry for him, if he had once said, 'Wife, I'm sorry'. But no; he insisted to himself it was her fault...The children breathed the air that was poisoned, and they felt dreary...Immediately Morel woke he got straight out of bed. That was characteristic of him all his life. He was all for activity. The prostrated inactivity of two mornings was stifling him...Morel made the meal alone, brutally. He ate and drank more noisily than he had need. No one spoke to him. The family life withdrew, shrank away...But he no longer cared about his isolation.²⁴

Since he fails as a sympathetic character he can only become an object, and though his passion for activity arouses occasional delight in the young children: 'the image of him sitting in his pit-dirt drinking...not coming home...but sitting, getting drunk on an empty stomach', is the one that prevails. The phrase in Lawrence's explanation to Edward Garnet about Sons and Lovers^{24a} in which the children are: 'urged into life' by the mother, leaves

24. Sons and Lovers, pp. 55-56.

24a. Collected Letters, p. 160.

more to be said. Its vagueness suggests a multitude of interdependent meanings. William is urged into a successful business career, Paul to be an artist, but in their formative years, the evidence from the narrative suggests that the children are primarily urged into imaginative response, and that the most persistent and disagreeable object of their attention is Morel.

Paul's first contact with life outside home, apart from hearing William read his love-letters from girls of whom Mrs. Morel disapproves, is with the brash clerks at the miners' pay office. The small boy suffered: 'the tortures of the damned', on these occasions, and later when Paul starts work such tortures of secret embarrassment and hyper-sensitiveness to unfamiliar company increase. His sensitivity has been unknowingly encouraged by the powerful action on a peculiarly receptive mind of the mother's response to all that constitutes her circumstances: the money shortage, her practical capability in running the household, his father's intrusion from the mine or public house, all, in effect, that results from his father's irresponsibility. Paul's first imaginative experience involves the terrifying noise in the ash tree also recorded in the poem quoted above: 'Discord in Childhood'. The next occurs on watching his mother iron while he is convalescing. He quickly learns to interpret her mood from her facial expressions as one of recurrent disillusionment. Thirdly, after a fierce fight in the street between the Morel children and another family he sees:

A big red moon lift itself up, slowly, between the waste road
over the hill-top, steadily, like a great bird. And he thought
of the Bible, that the moon should be turned to blood. And the
next day he made haste to be friends with Billy Pillins. 25

25. Sons and Lovers, p. 98.

The swift development from observation to image to resolution reported in this small cluster of sentences clarifies more than any explanation could the special cast of Paul's mind. There can be no doubt that his mother helped to form his earliest impressions, and that from her he also learnt how to be aware of problems, feelings and responses. Mrs. Morel shares her thoughts with him: 'almost without knowing', but as he grows up he is forced to go one step further than her and evaluate consciously the unforeseen difficulties and rewards her response to life bears with it.

Paul's reaction to starting work at Jordans is contrasted with that of his mother who goes with him for the interview. On promotion to London William had more than welcomed the challenge of city life and had basked in her praise. Paul, however: 'seemed to feel the business world, with its regulated systems of value, and its impersonality, and he dreaded it'. Going to Nottingham with his mother his mind is stimulated to imaginative transfigurations of the city:

'It's just like Venice,' he said, seeing the sunshine on the water that lay between high factory walls.

'Perhaps', she answered, smiling.²⁶

Inside Mr. Jordan's office, Paul is overcome by so many new impressions, unable to take them all in quickly enough to assess them:

Paul sniffed the odour of new wash-leather. He wondered what the things were. By this time he was so much stunned that he only noticed the outside things.

'Sit down!' said Mr Jordan... 'Did you write this letter?'

'Yes,' he answered.

At that moment he was occupied in two ways: first, on feeling guilty for telling a lie, since William had composed the letter; second, in wondering why his letter seemed so

26. Sons and Lovers, p. 117.

strange and different, in the fat, red hand of the man, from what it had been when it lay on the kitchen table. It was like part of himself, gone astray. He resented the way the man held it...

'But wasn't Mr Jordan common, mother? Does he own it all?'

'I suppose he was a workman who has got on,' she said.

'You mustn't mind people so much. They're not being disagreeable to you -it's their way. You always think people are meaning things for you. But they don't.'

27

Paul of course is impressionable and shy, but since to Mrs Morel there is a chance here for him to 'get on' his sufferings are at best justifiable, at worst unnecessary. She does not sympathise with Paul's torment in the same way as on different occasions he has sympathised with hers, and her response is coloured by her always wanting her sons to become members of the respectable middle class. Earlier, while finding advertisements for jobs in the Bestwood public library, Paul sees a brewer's waggoner on his rounds in the warm summer sunshine:

His red face shone and was almost asleep with sunshine. The horses, handsome and brown, went on by themselves, looking by far the master of the show.

Paul wished he were stupid. 'I wish,' he thought to himself, 'I was fat like him, and like a dog in the sun. I wish I was a pig and a brewer's waggoner.'

28

The envy in Paul's response here suggests a preference for his father's way of life over his mother's, who would have been horrified at the idea of Paul becoming a brewer's waggoner. This small instance is the first indication of future tendencies in Paul towards the conscious evaluation of the state of mind learnt from Mrs Morel. As can be seen when Paul starts work on his first morning, the 'decided positive' within her mind betrays a distinctive class bias:

27. Sons and Lovers, pp. 119-122.

28. Ibid. p. 114.

She felt, as she saw him trudging over the field, that where he determined to go he would get. She thought of William. He would have leaped the fence instead of going round to the stile. He was away in London, doing well. Paul would be working in Nottingham. Now she had two sons in the world. She could think of two places, great centres of industry, and feel that she had put a man into each of them, that these men would work out what she wanted.²⁹

On seeing Paul choose the stile and not the fence as William would she then goes on to imagine: ' (William) was away in London, doing well'. Her insensitivity to this detail, and her concentration instead on 'doing well' allows her to ignore the difference between William and Paul, which, had she fully acknowledged it, would have led her to a different conclusion. But she sees both of them as indistinguishable units, extensions of herself. Her ambition in this case overrides her imaginative response. These two elements are confused and intertwined to such a degree in Mrs. Morel that only a wholly imaginative mind such as Paul possessed would be able, throughout his complex history, to discover her limitation.

Another scene, when she and Paul visit Miriam's farm, illustrates their contrasting response. She feels released as on previous occasions by the beauty and peace of the countryside. Paul shares this but also notices the pit:

'The world is a wonderful place,' she said, 'and wonderfully beautiful.'

'And so's the pit,' he said. 'Look how it heaps together, like something alive almost - a big creature that you don't know.'

'Yes,' she said. 'Perhaps.'

'And all the trucks standing waiting, like a string of beasts to be fed,' he said.

'And very thankful I am they are standing,' she said, 'for that means they'll turn middlingtime this week.'

'But I like the feel of men on things, while they're alive.'

There's a feel of men about trucks, because they've been handled with men's hands, all of them.'

'Yes,' said Mrs Morel.³⁰

Her replies to the image-formations he makes of the pit bank: 'Yes ...Perhaps...And very thankful I am they are standing...Yes,' illustrate how a long experience of miners determined her view of the pit, while Paul's response naive as it may appear to her, is nevertheless a fresh and hopeful one. Frequently Paul admires the practical and 'sane' quality of her judgement, but here it creates a distance between mother and son. Paul too appreciates the attractions of work and activity, but from a distance, and at a more conscious level than Mrs. Morel's 'sanity'. His judgements are less fixed, and his sensitivity, learnt from her, but coming upon surroundings afresh and without precognition, more widely evaluative. Her fixity excludes how she once thought of the mine as a place where Morel: 'risked his life daily, and with gaiety'.³¹

This contrast between mother and son does not alter the radical opposition between husband and wife, nor the centrality of imaginative response, throughout the novel, in Lawrence's analysis of the characters. Nevertheless, these scenes with the brewer's waggoner and the mine indicate a slight shift. Lawrence gives many examples of Paul's thinking; his way of transforming visual impressions into images closely resembles that found in Lawrence's poem quoted at the beginning of this section. But Paul can never abandon himself fully to the way his father thinks, and Lawrence himself attempted to do this, stylistically, only after Sons and Lovers was completed. But a shift occurs away from a simple rendering of the mechanics of

30. Sons and Lovers, p. 154.

31. Ibid. p. 19.

imaginative thought to a conscious evaluation of it.

In the second half of Sons and Lovers the style becomes noticeably more abstract, there is more discussion, less visual presentation of household circumstances and daily life. The younger characters respond as much to ideas as to their surroundings. Paul begins to explore alternative ways of seeing and feeling to those established in him by his childhood.

IV

Gyp, Miriam and Clara

As is well known, Lawrence's letter to Edward Garnett describes the split that occurs within each of Mrs. Morel's sons as they grow up. The mother remains: 'the strongest power in their lives... William gives his sex to a fribble, and his mother holds his soul'.³² The mother is the key figure, not only in her sons' early lives, but later when they meet other women. Paul reacts against Miriam because she in some ways resembles his mother. William rejects Gyp because she compares unfavourably with his mother. Not only that, she presents an opposite type of thinking to Mrs. Morel: one of crude irresponsibility. Paul, from the evidence of his early youth, appears to possess an imaginative way of seeing, in his own fashion, and not in an entirely identical way to his mother. William, as is brought out predominantly through Lawrence's presentation of his one and only love affair, is less capable of using his powers of thought independently, and more likely to accept without question what she thinks is right.

Lawrence's assessment of character throughout Sons and Lovers

32. Collected Letters. p. 160.

shows the strong influence of his mother's own reactions in the implicit yet undeniable value placed upon imaginative response. Characters incapable of such response are partly condemned, and, more insidiously, partly ignored, for their way of thinking holds less essential interest for the novelist. Such a character William selects as his fiancée, but out of weakness, and not because she offers a real alternative to his mother. Her dissimilarity from Mrs. Morel in the very fashion we have become accustomed to regard her, is the ultimate proof for William of Gyp's unsuitability. The fact that she is different is merely her misfortune. In this the novelist's attitude to her resembles that shown to Morel, and like him she is an outsider among the Morel family:

'Read of book! Why, she's never read a book in her life.'
'Oh, go along!' said Mrs Morel, cross with the exaggeration.
'It's true, mother - she hasn't,' he cried, jumping up and taking his old position on the hearthrug. 'She's never read a book in her life.'
''Er's like me,' chimed in Morel. ''Er canna see what there is i' books, ter sit borin' your nose in 'em for, nor more can I.'³³

William's own thoughts about Gyp are addressed to his mother but, rather rudely, actually in Gyp's presence, so that the dramatic emphasis by which the three are arranged stands out. The thinking and analysing part of William's personality, through which he attempts to place himself and his experience in perspective, ignores Gyp and recognises his mother. He places her in a superior position to either himself or Gyp, where she remains as the 'strongest power', stronger even than sexuality, in William's life. Lawrence passes no opinion on this state of affairs but merely records the

the objective fact:

He read a great deal, and had a quick, active intelligence. She could understand nothing but love-making and chatter. He was accustomed to having all his thoughts sifted through his mother's mind; so, when he wanted companionship, and was asked in reply to be the billing and twittering lover, he hated his betrothed.³⁴

Gyp is charming, ostentatiously fashionable, but trivial and irresponsible. Not only has she no practical sense but, as William says: 'You know, she's not like you mother. She's not serious. She can't think.' This is upheld as the final factor against her. William sits up at night and turns the thought of marriage over in his mind with his mother as a guiding spirit. But instead of working through to his own conclusions his method of thinking involves simply feeding the information about Gyp to his mother and thence adopting the opinions he imagines his mother would feed back to him. Gyp has never read a book. She got confirmed three times just for show. She is wasteful with money. The impressions accumulate until an image is formed:

'As for love!' he cried, 'you might as well ask a fly to love you! It'll love settling on you - - '³⁵

Like Morel, Gyp is reduced to an object, and for the same reasons. She is incapable of taking part in the activity that William calls 'thinking' or being 'serious', and which is associated not with money and high living, for Gyp has plenty of that, but with hard work, integrity and respectability, in fact with everything that William associates with his mother.

34. Sons and Lovers, p. 163.

35. Ibid. p. 165.

Paul's values, as has been shown, are not entirely identified with those of Mrs. Morel, and he is more capable than William of following through his thinking process to its individual conclusions. As a young boy, Paul liked Gyp simply because she was pretty, and because she and William took him on their walks. But in his friendship with Miriam Paul is asked to confront or condone those values of his mother's that are manifest in the novel's content and style from the beginning. In this sense Paul's task was therefore still substantially shared by Lawrence himself. Miriam, because of her own strong inclination for imaginative response, cannot be reduced to an object, but equally since she is the mother's rival she cannot be accepted. Miriam herself is both object and medium through which imaginative response is affected:

'Is she [Miriam] so fascinating that you must follow her all that way?' Mrs Morel was bitterly sarcastic. She sat still, with averted face, stroking, with a rhythmic, jerked movement, the black sateen of her apron. It was a movement that hurt Paul to see.

'I do like her,' he said, 'but - - '

'I do like to talk to her -I never said I didn't. But I don't love her.'

'Is there nobody else to talk to?'

'Not about the things we talk of. There's lots of things that you're not interested in, that - - '

'What things?'

Mrs Morel was so intense that Paul began to pant.

'Why -painting -and books. You don't care about Herbert Spencer.'

'No,' was the sad reply. 'And you won't at my age.'

'Well, but I do now -and Miriam does - - '

'And how do you know,' Mrs Morel flashed defiantly, 'that I shouldn't? Do you ever try me?'

'But you don't, Mother, you know you don't care whether a picture's decorative or not; you don't care what manner it is in.'

...'What is it, then -what is it, then, that matters to me?' she flashed. He knitted his brows with pain.

'You're old, Mother, and we're young.'

He only meant that the interests of her age were not the interest of his. But he realised the moment he had spoken that he had said the wrong thing... Instinctively he realised

that he was life to her. And, after all, she was the chief thing to him, the only supreme thing.³⁶

Paul has more difficulty in explaining Miriam than William had in reaching conclusions about Gyp, for Miriam has everything, and more, in the way of imaginative response, that Mrs. Morel has. The novel abounds in recurrent visual details of Mrs. Morel such as that in the passage above: the jerked, stroking movement of her hand: 'that hurt Paul to see'. Yet she is also a medium through which discussion takes place. Miriam's presentation contains this same dual aspect. There are certain things in her appearance and behaviour Paul notices more than others: her finger in her mouth, her rich colouring, her way of saying 'Ah' with a sigh of mirthless recognition, and her general shrinking from any brutality or coarseness. At the same time Miriam is eager to learn, to discuss, as above, the important matter of artistic response and style, as well as human relationships and ideas, and to help the artist in Paul to: 'bring forth his imaginations'. But Paul, for whatever unknown autobiographical reasons Lawrence may have had, eventually finds fault with Miriam equally on both counts, and she is presented both as a false medium for imaginative thought and as an unpleasant person to look at and to be with, of whom Paul's consistent impression is one of irritation. Her looks and her behaviour alienate him as simultaneously he disapproves of her response to life. But if she ends, like Morel and Gyp, in being but one more foil to Mrs. Morel, this happens only after a long, hardly interrupted conflict, during which Paul searches not only to assess Miriam's way of seeing, but

36. Sons and Lovers, p. 261.

but to find a true way of seeing her. There can be no doubt that Lawrence approves of what Paul finds because he can present no alternative to the working of Paul's mind. Through it, as through the established stylistic propensity for imaginative response, the other characters are assessed. A familiar pattern appears in the presentation, of Paul's opinion being backed up by an observation from the novelist, as in the following example:

'You're always begging for things to love you,' he said, 'as if you were a beggar for love. Even the flowers, you have to fawn on them - -'

Rhythmically, Miriam was swaying and stroking the flower with her mouth, inhaling the scent which ever after made her shudder as it came to her nostrils.³⁷

Paul's impression is simultaneously Lawrence's narrative report. Miriam's intensity at this point may well be destroying: 'the characterful integrity of objects' as Dorothy Van Ghent claims, but since no adequate alternative response intervenes between the novelist's and that of the hero, the reader is left with no context by which to weigh one character against another and assess their differences for himself. When Miriam's thoughts are given, they acquiesce to Paul's view and she is then blamed for her acquiescence:

He meant she loved him more than he her. Perhaps he could not love her. Perhaps she had not in herself that which he wanted. It was the deepest motive of her soul, this self-mistrust. It was so deep she dared neither realise nor acknowledge it. Perhaps she was deficient. Like an infinitely subtle shame, it kept her always back. If it were so, she would do without him. She would never let herself want him. She would merely see.³⁸

The first sentence of this passage is Miriam's considered response

37. Sons and Lovers, p. 268.

38. Ibid. p. 271.

to Paul's statement that he can give only friendship. The two subsequent sentences beginning 'Perhaps...' continue as her own thoughts exploring the reason for Paul's statement. The two following: 'It was the deepest motive of her soul... It was so deep she dared neither realise nor acknowledge it', suggest by their decisiveness a return to Lawrence's objective version of a deficiency evident otherwise only in Miriam's uncertainty. Her very thoughts are being judged, supposedly by her, while she is thinking them, and this creates a sense of an agonised double consciousness at work in her mind, a mind deeply aware of what it will not admit. The implication is that Paul is right to be dissatisfied with Miriam because of Miriam's profound dissatisfaction with herself, and that Miriam knows he is right. But Paul is equally self-mistrustful at this point and full of a sense of deficiency. The doubts Paul harbours about his own ways of seeing, feeling and thinking are all implanted into Miriam's character and we have no way of knowing whether his assessment of her is a fair one.

The character of Paul contains all Lawrence's effort to find an alternative way of thinking or feeling to that of imaginative response, to that of the 'soul'. Miriam is made responsible not only for examining her own thought-process and finding it wanting, but also for failing to provide Paul with an alternative, and the reader's frequent feeling of unfairness results from the fact that Miriam shoulders all the responsibility and all the blame while gaining none of the novelist's sympathy. The most generous interpretation of Lawrence's analysis of the characters of Paul and Miriam would be that through them he is searching for an alternative by which imaginative response can be understood, not as an absolute

criterion of value, but in a fuller context.

A less generous one perhaps is that it is the mother, not Miriam whom Paul ought to be questioning and this is the view put forward by Jessie Chambers. That Paul is merely adopting his mother's opinion of the girl holds true for several instances of his dissatisfaction, but it removes Paul even further from finding what he seeks:

(Miriam) plodded beside him. He hated her, for she seemed in some way to make him despise himself... He loved to think of his mother, and the other jolly people... Mrs Morel hated her for making her son like this. She watched Paul growing irritable, priggish,^{and} melancholic. For this she put the blame on Miriam... And Paul hated (Miriam) because, somehow, she spoilt his ease and naturalness.³⁹

The previous example of Miriam's self-mistrust resembles the self-scrutiny Paul suffers here, one encouraged by his mother's watchfulness. But when Miriam's state of mind can be shown to reflect their dissatisfaction, in the kind of double consciousness noted above, Paul and his mother can be henceforth exonerated.

The effect of Miriam therefore is often to propel Paul back towards his mother rather than forward to an alternative way of feeling from Mrs. Morel's. His mother is sane, 'jolly' and practical, while Miriam despises every day affairs and is too self-conscious and 'spiritual'. She dislikes housework and hates being a servant to her coarse brothers. Imagining herself: 'a princess turned into a swine-girl' she fears at first that Paul will see her only as a swine-girl. Gradually but thoroughly she is depicted as a character who lives an imaginary existence quite separate from actuality, and who uses her imagination not to enliven or comprehend

39. Sons and Lovers, p. 221.

her daily experience but to escape from it into a world of fantasy. Even though Lawrence approves Paul's contrast of Miriam with Mrs. Morel, Paul is partly right. Miriam is addicted to the world of nature, with which she enjoys a rapturous communion. Mrs. Morel has had similar experiences before Paul was born when she found solace and perspective in the beautiful evenings and in the peace of her garden, but she had come upon these experiences quite accidentally and they had been intensified by long periods of struggle with difficult material circumstances that Mrs. Morel had known intimately. Miriam however, consciously seeks out such moments of communion to sustain her religious ecstasy and they are far removed from normal living. By a significant shift, Miriam also encourages Paul's creative talent towards an appreciation of the meaning or energy within an object, as something in itself and distinct from the mere 'stiffness of the shape'. He explains the effect of one painting as follows:

'It's more shimmery, as if I'd painted the shimmering protoplasm in the leaves and everywhere, and not the stiffness of the shape. That seems dead to me. Only this shimmeriness is the real living. The shape is a dead crust. The shimmer is inside really.'

And she, with her little finger in her mouth, would ponder these sayings... And they were the medium through which she came distinctly at her beloved objects.⁴⁰

But Paul reacts against this lack of physicality that her response stimulates;

'Why are you always sad?' he asked her.

'Sad!' she exclaimed, looking up at him with startled, wonderful brown eyes.

'Yes,' he replied. 'You are always, always sad.'

40. Sons and Lovers, p. 189.

'I am not -oh, not a bit!' she cried.
 'But even your joy is like a flame coming off of sadness,'
 he persisted. 'You're never jolly, or even just all right.'
 'No,' she pondered. 'I wonder -why.'
 'Because you're not; because you're different inside, like
 a pine-tree, and then you flare up; but you're not just like an
 ordinary tree, with fidgety leaves and jolly - - '41

The word 'jolly' Paul frequently applies to his mother, especially to distinguish her from Miriam. But his attraction to Miriam depends upon the quality of his own response to experience and to the outer world as being a search for inward meaning and direction. By implying that something resembling peace of mind or ease of body can be lost by such an analytical approach to experience, Paul questions the value of imaginative reactions, not so much in himself or his mother, but in Miriam, who stands in for them both as the painful inquisition begins to require a victim.

Paul's affair with Clara Dawes constitutes an escape from his and Miriam's way of feeling to one closer to his father's. This affair, and the Morels' early married life are the only two occasions in the novel of passionate love, both of them brief. But Paul's experience, since he cannot totally deny the influence of Miriam or his mother, is one of alternation rather than stability. Clara's response to life is less important to him than her physical presence and she remains as an object of his attention, albeit an extremely attractive one. Paul reaches his decision to finish with Miriam after an encounter with some coarse strong lilies in Mrs. Morel's garden: 'Hunting round, he found the purple iris, touched their fleshy throats and their dark, grasping hands. At any rate, he had found something'. Dorothy Van Ghent claims that

41. Sons and Lovers, pp. 189-190.

Lawrence is making an issue here of the: 'fierce thereness or otherness', against which Mrs. Morel had rebelled earlier. But the flowers, different on each occasion, simply form an objective equivalent of the emotion of the person responding. Like Mrs. Morel still suffering from the frenzy with her husband 'the lilies were reeling in the moonlight...(until) she herself melted out like scent into the shiny, pale air'. Paul however, is 'hunting around' and what he finds reflects his desperation at that moment, for the lilies have 'dark, grasping hands... They stood stiff in the darkness'. Their physical appearance in each case is founded upon the attitude of the observer and not upon any intrinsic value either character succeeds or fails to acknowledge.

Under Miriam's influence, Paul rejects: 'the stiffness of the shape', in favour of the inner energy, direction or meaning of the trees in his painting. His attraction to Clara denotes a focal shift, a preference now for that 'stiffness' and solid form. He uses his father's dialect with her. He grows infatuated by her physical appearance: the blood mantled behind her ears, the shape of her breasts in her blouse, her powerful, slumbering walk, and that memorable occasion at the theatre when he was: 'obsessed by the desire to kiss the tiny blue vein that nestled in the bend of her arm. He could feel it. His whole life seemed suspended till he had put his lips there. It must be done'. Now, as Miriam remembers his own words to her, Paul finds his experience of something 'big and intense'.

But this experience, like almost all others of Paul's, happens

because of a previous and deeper alignment and his desire to transcend that, and to escape. Clara cannot contain, or obliterate Paul's continually returning sense of perspectives wherein the motion and direction of changing forms demands his recognition and final allegiance. In these long perspectives the questions Paul asks himself about Clara are answered:

Why does she absorb me?... What is she, after all?... Here's the sea-coast morning, big and permanent and beautiful; there is she, fretting, always unsatisfied, and temporary as a bubble of foam. What does she mean to me, after all? She represents something, like a bubble of foam represents the sea. But what is she? It's not her I care for. 42

As before, what Paul sees presents him with an image of the way in which he sees. He is in a state of mind where shape, form, solidity withhold meaningfulness rather than enhance it. As here form Clara cannot absorb him and his discreet question: 'Why does she...' implies that she cannot. Both Paul and Clara consider that with each other they have: 'received their confirmation', their: 'Baptism of fire in passion... The Baptism of life'. But Clara realises that whatever happens next, Paul will have to leave her and 'go on alone'. Keith Alldritt has helpfully interpreted many instances of Paul's essential isolation as: 'the difficulty of attaining a proper personal freedom and autonomy...which is the necessary condition of the artist's life'.⁴³ And clearly Paul's isolation is presented as a problem to him. Paul is an onlooker who desperately wishes to become a participant, but who shifts from one extreme

42. Sons and Lovers, p. 435.

43. Alldritt, The Visual Imagination of D.H. Lawrence, p. 33.

to the other in his effort to escape the conflict.

Paul and Clara's love-making had included moments of awareness of a creative, ordering energy, uniting and distinguishing all natural forms, although later their love becomes mechanical and its conscious over-working apparent to both of them. But it does not include the factory at Jordans, where Paul keeps himself separate, or the continuity of everyday life any more than his relationship with Miriam did. The following passage from The Rainbow describes the effect of marriage upon Tom Brangwen's response to his familiar surroundings. It suggests Brangwen's awareness of an ordered stability, his transcendence of anxiety, and a fixture of significances that does not deny fresh response and appreciation:

It made a great difference to him, marriage. Things became so remote and of so little significance, as he knew the powerful source of his life, his eyes opened on a new universe, and he wondered in thinking of his triviality before. A new, calm relationship showed to him in the things he saw, the cattle he used, the young wheat as it eddied in the wind.⁴⁴

Such a 'new, calm relationship' is that which eludes Paul. Tom Brangwen has gained confidence, a sense of the rightness of his own judgement that yet considers new discoveries possible, within the established calm, and Lawrence's style reflects the blended evenness of experience powerfully illuminated, not distanced or reduced, by his astonished self-realisation. Tom is both onlooker and participant, a single state of mind is displayed, momentary but recurrent, and at least always imminently available as it never is in Sons and Lovers.

In The Rainbow the resolution of the conflict so accurately

44. The Rainbow, p. 59.

explored during Sons and Lovers attains a religious stature. And though the problem cannot be resolved in the earlier novel, the possibility of religious experience and the general question of religion are approached there. Gyp may have been confirmed three times for show, but Miriam's inadequacy foretells Tom's achievement, and through his analysis of Miriam, Lawrence isolates the essential components which, if only they could be woven together, would satisfy Paul's need for a complete harmony of body and mind:

'It's not religious to be religious,' he said. 'I reckon a crow is religious when it sails across the sky. But it only does it because it feels itself carried to where it's going, not because it thinks it is being eternal.'

But Miriam knew that one should be religious in everything, have God, whatever God might be, present in everything.⁴⁵

To Paul religious experience entails: 'feeling (oneself) carried'. But because this involves too direct a rebuttal of self-consciousness, he is unable to achieve it even with Clara in any serious or long-term sense. Miriam's over-eagerness to: 'have God present in everything', and to prefer the presence of God to the every-day things around her only forces her to be disappointed. To both of them religion remains less a reality requiring recognition than an idea they can only explore consciously and verbally. Paul's repetition of the word 'religious' suggests that he is striving to define a mental preference rather than his actual emotional state, of which, ironically, he is less conscious than all his talk about consciousness would have Miriam believe. But it could be that Lawrence is making a class point here, and achieving in the process a much greater clarification of class differences than can be found

45. Sons and Lovers, p. 307.

in The White Peacock. Having discussed religion with his mother, Paul then introduces the notion of class: 'the difference between people isn't in their class, but in themselves. Only from the middle classes one gets ideas, and from the common people -life itself, warmth'.⁴⁶ For all their supposed intelligence this notion could not have been expressed by Lettie or Leslie Tempest, and it also places in context Paul and Miriam's earlier discussion of ideas. Paul's attraction to the middle classes represented by Miriam and his mother is acknowledged by him quite openly and contributes a good deal to his understanding of himself. Mrs. Morel, Paul and Miriam are alike in that none of them could: 'go and talk to your father's pals' as Mrs. Morel points out to Paul. But she goes on to say: 'After all, whom do you mix with now... Those that exchange ideas, like the middle classes. The rest don't interest you',⁴⁷ and this is a distinguishing feature between mother and son, for from whatever standpoint Paul clearly is interested, as his friendship with Baxter Dawes later proves. It is Mrs. Morel who is not interested, and in shifting the focus from Mrs. Morel, Lawrence has begun to question his earlier alignment with characters capable of self-realisation, aware as he is becoming of their lack of interest in others.

46. Sons and Lovers, p. 313.

47. Ibid.

After his mother's death Paul's contact with the outer world fails to hold any meaning for him. The city streets, the countryside, the public bars, Miriam and Clara, everything to which he was related finally only through his mother, and his mother's judgement, decay at last into unreality. The only thing that is left is the frail, almost imperceptible difference from her that marks his isolation, and through which he had, latterly, been learning how to face life alone. As autobiography, Sons and Lovers contains a full account of what it might have been like to be Lawrence immediately after his mother's death, and leaves no doubt that during that time the independent life pleaded for in the poem 'End of Another Home Holiday' was being thoroughly put to the test. Before Mrs. Morel dies, the emotional awareness she fostered in her own lifetime and Paul's, becomes agony for both of them. They look into each other's eyes as they did when Paul was a tiny baby, but this time neither can face what they discover there. Such is the bond of those who: 'had, in fact, faced the world together', that Paul gives her morphine. Paul's impression of the last stages of her illness remains as that of her eyes: 'dark and full of torture'. The nature of her sensitiveness, and the influence of her judgement, are kept before him as she painfully relives the significant scenes of her past:

Sometimes as she lay he knew she was thinking of the past. Her mouth gradually shut hard in a line. She was holding herself rigid, so that she might die without ever uttering the great cry that was tearing from her. He never forgot that hard, utterly lonely and stubborn clenching of her mouth, which persisted for weeks. Sometimes, when it was lighter, she talked about her

husband. Now she hated him. She did not forgive him... And a few things, the things that had been most bitter to her, came up again so strongly that they broke from her, and she told her son...

Sometimes, in the sunny afternoons, she seemed almost happy. 'I try to think of the nice times -when we went to Mablethorpe, and Robin Hood's Bay, and Shanklin,' she said. 'After all, not everybody has seen those beautiful places. And wasn't it beautiful! I try to think of that, not of the other things.'

48

The familiar process of gathering together impressions that culminate in a few dynamic images representing the whole experience, is here rehearsed for the last time in Mrs. Morel's mind. Alone in her garden:

She went over the last scene, then over it again, certain phrases, certain moments coming each time like a brand red-hot down on her soul; and each time she enacted again the past hour, each time the brand came down at the same points, till the mark was burnt in, and the pain burnt out, and at last she came to herself.

49

The pattern of image thinking remains with her at the end of her life as it was when she was young. But coupled with her illness, the pain, this time, cannot be burnt out. Her reminiscing arouses an imaginative response of equal intensity in Paul, who watches during the actual moments of its conception. While she cannot forget her past, he too: 'never forgot that hard, utterly lonely and stubborn clenching of her mouth'. The dual working of their minds upon experience at the same moment, underlines the central importance of the imaginative process without which the drama would not be as it is.

48. Sons and Lovers, p. 469.

49. Ibid. p. 34.

In this chapter the intention has been to show how the style of Sons and Lovers, in so far as it consistently presents instances of imaginative response as found in the early poems, is complemented by the dominant influence of Mrs. Morel. As the novel unfolds, Paul becomes the only one of her sons who struggles to circumvent this influence, and his search foretells, in the ideas and attitudes that develop, Lawrence's growing interest in the dangers of imaginative reactions, and in ways they may be qualified.

In Lawrence's early poems almost all the subject-matter contained autobiography, and in the context of his first novel, Sons and Lovers was a major achievement in bringing narrative closer to the imaginative process as it operated in the most successful of the poems. But to classify The White Peacock as fiction, and Sons and Lovers as autobiographical fiction is inaccurate mainly because the change was a gradual one. In the following chapter, the purpose will be to show, through an examination of some of Lawrence's other early prose works, how the conditions which most encouraged his genius during the Sons and Lovers period, were those which united autobiographical subjects with a deeper analysis of the imaginative process.

CHAPTER FOUR: Towards and Beyond Sons and Lovers:

The Trespasser, and 'Odour of Chrysanthemums.'

Even if we did not know that it had no very deep roots in Lawrence's experience, we should divine it from the uncertain quality of the writing. It never manages to be modestly undistinguished: in parts it is extremely good, but in other parts it is grossly and flamingly bad, not with the prophetic over-emphasis of Lawrence's later bad writing, but with the second-hand poetry of the woman's magazine. ¹

The Trespasser, Lawrence's second novel, was revised just before the completion of Sons and Lovers, and introduces, in its second half, subject-matter similar to that of the Sons and Lovers period. Domestic loyalties, where the mother and children are united against the father, occupied Lawrence towards the end of The Trespasser, even though the main parts of the story are not autobiographical. The narrative was suggested to him by Helen Corke - a friend during his years in Croydon, from whose experience it was taken. The novel was begun in March 1910, but Lawrence withdrew it from publication partly on Ford Hueffer's advice, and partly as a result of his own dissatisfactions with what was then the first draft. He returned to the story early in 1912, postponing work on Sons and Lovers until March. ²

Few critics, if they mention the novel at all, would fail to agree with Hough's comment on The Trespasser except perhaps to say that no part of the novel qualifies for the least hint of praise. No one normally wastes time mortifying their chosen novelist and a

1. Graham Hough, on The Trespasser. The Dark Sun, (1956), p. 34.
2. See Collected Letters, pp. 91-97.

quoted paragraph of torrid prose usually serves to make their point for them. George Ford, however, describes The Trespasser as: 'one of Lawrence's most bitter stories of aloneness',³ and in a sense Siegmund's suicide constitutes an extreme alternative to the direction taken by Paul Morel at the end of Sons and Lovers.

Like Paul, Siegmund has the ability to think imaginatively about his condition, and the condition itself shows strong similarities to that of the autobiographical hero of the later novel. Both men are attracted to women whose capacity for thought defiles their capacity for love. Both are mother-orientated and neither have achieved sexual fulfilment. Both lack stability in their home circumstances and meaningful absorption in their worldly affairs. And although Siegmund's isolation from his family strongly resembles Walter Morel's, it differs in so far as Siegmund is conscious of his suffering in ways Morel is never shown to be. Only a certain type of character is fully equipped to occupy the central position in stories of the Sons and Lovers period, one in whom imaginative thinking dominates, fails to co-exist with other elements, and so becomes the prime cause of unhappiness. Siegmund's estrangement from his wife is a misalliance of intellectual with sensual and domestic interests. Helena, his mistress, is an educated woman with some, at times vague, claims to cultural superiority.

Helena attempts, like Lettie Beardsall, to flavour reality with allusions to art, music and literature, none of which illuminates her immediate situation, and Lawrence aids both lovers by inflating their romance with Wagnerian overtones. Lawrence under-

3. Ford, Double Measure, p. 74.

lines Helena's role in a conversation between Siegmund and his old but forgotten friend Hampson.⁴ 'These deep, interesting women,' says Hampson, 'don't want us; they want the flowers of the spirit they can gather from us...therefore they destroy the natural man in us.' Without this scene it would indeed be difficult to maintain any impression from her thoughts or her brief exchanges with Siegmund of Helena as in any way 'deep' or 'interesting'. Her behaviour provides no evidence for such a description and the disconnected aspect of the Hampson episode pinpoints not only one major fault of the novel but also, as in The White Peacock, Lawrence's uncertainty about the precise nature and function of the imaginative process.

The following passage is an example of the way Helena sees and thinks:

'That yellow flower hadn't time to be brushed and combed by the fairies before dawn came. It is tousled....' so she thought to herself. The pink convolvuli were fairy horns or telephones from the day fairies to the night fairies. The rippling sunlight on the sea was the Rhine maidens spreading their bright hair to the sun. That was her favourite form of thinking. The value of all things was in the fancy they evoked. She did not care for people; they were vulgar, ugly, and stupid, as a rule.⁵

The penultimate sentence of this passage implies an important criticism of Helena since her response to her surroundings is not imaginative but fanciful, but this criticism does not accord with the conception of Helena as 'deep and interesting' nor does it prevent Lawrence himself from filling out the narrative with fanciful distractions. The world inhabited by the lovers is made more unreal

4. The Trespasser, pp. 81-86.

5. Ibid. p. 43.

by Lawrence's own failure to write convincingly of their happiness. Both Alldritt and Hough quote passages where this is attempted, as examples of the novel's deplorable style.⁶ And convincing occasions of imaginative response only occur during the Isle of Wight episode when the lovers realise that their idealised conception of each other has been based on a sustained falsehood. Helen Corke's own novel, Neutral Ground⁷ and her diary entries, contain many details of the story, and from his reading of this evidence, Delavenay has made the following remarks:

The notes on which Lawrence based the 300 pages of his novel take up no more than thirty two pages in Helen Corke's later version of the story, Neutral Ground. Yet all the main data were already there: the journey to the Isle of Wight, the evenings in the cottage where the lovers stay; their bathes and seashore explorations; sun-scorched and moonlit walks; Helena's emotion at the carved Christ on his cross in a Catholic graveyard; their anguish at the thought of the morrow; the last goodbye on Wimbledon station; Helena's departure to complete her holiday in Cornwall; her anxiety at not receiving a letter; the news of the suicide in the evening paper; Helena's illness and delirium. Everything, even the smallest incident such as an electric light bulb found unbroken on the seashore or a misshapen invalid in his bath chair, passes directly from Helen's notes into Lawrence's novel.⁸

Even though The Trespasser has no narrator to report on the thoughts and feelings of its characters, much of the text resembles The White Peacock in that the experiences described are not those of the author, as they were in Sons and Lovers and the early poems. Despite his visit to the Isle of Wight in 1909, and his close friendship with Helen Corke (Helena) herself, the novel contains

6. Alldritt, The Visual Imagination of D.H. Lawrence, p. 10. Hough, The Dark Sun, p. 34.
7. Helen Corke, Neutral Ground, (1933).
8. Emile Delavenay, D.H. Lawrence, His Life and Works, (1972), p. 98.

many passages in which the symbolic interpretation of certain events proceeds not from the characters' own imaginative response but from Lawrence's attempt to impose his own symbolism on the details of the story:

The sea played by itself, intent on its own game. Its aloofness, its self-sufficiency, are its great charm. The sea does not give and take, like the land and the sky. It has no traffic with the world. It spends its passion upon itself. Helena was something like the sea, self-sufficient and careless of the rest.⁹

One might usefully compare this passage with that from Sons and Lovers where Paul sees Clara walking on the beach at Theddlethorpe, to realise how an appropriate handling of imaginative response, where symbolic meaning relates to the characters' own perceptions of the outer world, leads to stylistic achievement and thematic clarity. 'The sea', above, has less meaning and narrative importance due to the fact that neither of the main characters form there any significant attitude towards it.

From the details Delavenay gives of the novel's composition, it seems clear that Lawrence's analysis of Siegmund after the holiday was not a filling out of Helen Corke's notes but a conception in which Lawrence relied elsewhere than upon her diary material later used by her in Neutral Ground. If her account supplied those sections which resemble The White Peacock the final chapters mark a departure from this, not least evident in their stylistic advance. Travelling home by train with Helena, Siegmund pictures in his mind's eye the events that await him:

9. The Trespasser, p. 43.

The train at last moved out of the station. As it passed through Portsmouth, Siegmund remembered his coming down, on the Sunday. It seemed an indefinite age ago. He was thankful that he sat on the side of the carriage opposite from the one he had occupied five days before. The afternoon of the flawless sky was ripening into evening. The chimneys and the sides of the houses of Portsmouth took on that radiant appearance which transfigures the end of day in town. A rich bloom of light appears on the surfaces of brick and stone.

'It will go on,' thought Siegmund, 'being gay of an evening, for ever. And I shall miss it all!'

But as soon as the train moved into the gloom of the Town station, he began again:

'Beatrice will be proud, and silent as steel when I get home. She will say nothing, thank God - nor shall I. That will expedite matters: there will be no interruptions.

'But we cannot continue together after this. Why should I discuss reasons for and against? ... She goes to a cottage in the country...I manage for myself in lodgings in London. Very good...

'But then, what then? Beatrice and the children in the country, and me not looking after the children. Beatrice is thriftless. She would be in endless difficulty...She would not make any efforts. 'He has brought it on us,' she would say; 'Let him see what the result is'...

Siegmund leaned with his head against the window, watching the country whirl past, but seeing nothing. He thought imaginatively, and his imagination destroyed him. He pictured Beatrice in the country. He sketched the morning - breakfast haphazard at a late hour; the elder children rushing off without food, miserable and untidy, the youngest bewildered under her swift, indifferent preparations for school. He thought of Beatrice in the evening, worried and irritable, her bills unpaid, the work undone...

This line exhausted or intolerable, Siegmund switched off to the consideration of his own life in town...

'If I were rich,' said Siegmund, 'all would be plain. I would give each of my children enough, and Beatrice, and we [himself and Helena] would go away; but I am nearly forty; I have no genius; I shall never be rich.' Round and round went his thoughts like oxen over a threshing floor, treading out the grain. Gradually the chaff flew away; gradually the corn of conviction gathered small and hard upon the floor.¹⁰

The above passage presents the imaginative process working to bring Siegmund a knowledge of his emotional state. It follows the steps first illustrated during analysis of the early poems where observation of the outer world, as in the first paragraph above,

10. The Trespasser, pp. 139-141.

subsequently develops into the observer's awareness of circumstances other than those of the present. Working together, these effects help Siegmund to solve the problem at the centre of his mind, and enable him to reach a decision. In this case the beauty of the evening and the gloominess of the approaching station stimulate Siegmund's thoughts until new area of focus are lit up. A state of perplexity, and no other state, offers the correct occasion for imaginative thinking, rather than being discharged in superfluities of fancy, Siegmund's thoughts now concentrate on the practical realities largely postponed until this moment in the narrative. Though we suspect the decision is suicide, the last two sentences only tell us that some resolution has been reached. In doing so they describe the manner in which it has been reached. With rhythm and force all excess of thoughts and impressions have been pared down to the fibre of experience.

The overall structure of The Trespasser from Chapter 21 onwards contains repeated periods of emotional realisation as the dominant features of Siegmund's crisis become more and more emphatic and his decision is at last carried out. Just before this happens, two passages occur which bring out the alternative forms of imaginative writing Lawrence employed at this stage of his development. In the first, the natural world is given symbolic organisation by the author's perceptions alone. In the second, metaphor advances the character's understanding of his emotions and is not used merely to embellish description:

The lightning, like a bird that should have flown before the arm of day, moved on its nest in the boughs of darkness, raised itself, flickered its pale wings rapidly, then sank again, loath to fly. Siegmund watched it with wonder and delight.

The day was pushing aside the boughs of darkness, hunting. The poor moon would be caught when the net was flung...There it was, like a poor white mouse, a half-moon, crouching on the mound of its course. It would run nimbly over to the western slope, then it would be caught in the net, and the sun would laugh, like a great yellow cat, as it stalked behind playing with its prey, flashing out its bright paws. The moon, before making its last run, lay crouched, palpitating. The sun crept forth, laughing to itself as it saw its prey could not escape. The lightning, however, leaped low off the nest like a bird decided to go, and flew away. Siegmund no longer saw it opening and shutting its wings in hesitation amid the disturbance of the dawn. Instead there came a flush, the white lightning gone. The brief pink butterflies of sunrise and sunset rose up from the mown fields of darkness, and fluttered low in a cloud. Even in the west they flew in a narrow, rosy swarm. They separated, thinned, rising higher. Some, flying up, became golden. Some flew rosy gold across the moon, the mouse-moon motionless with fear. Soon the pink butterflies had gone, leaving a scarlet stretch like a field of poppies in the fens. As a wind, the light of day blew in from the east, puff after puff filling with whiteness the space which had been the night. Siegmund sat watching the last morning blowing in across the mown darkness, till the whole field of the world was exposed, till the moon was like a dead mouse which floats on water.

'Where is Helena?' he asked himself, and he looked out on the morning.

Everything out of doors was unreal, like a show, like a peep-show. Helena was an actress somewhere in the brightness of this view. He alone was out of the piece...For a long time he sat with clenched teeth, merely holding himself in check. In his present state of irritability everything that occurred to his mind stirred him with dislike or disgust. Helena, music, the pleasant company of friends, the sunshine of the country, each, as it offered itself to his thoughts, was met by an angry contempt, was rejected scornfully. As nothing could please or distract him, the only thing that remained was to support the discord. He felt as if he were a limb out of joint from the body of life: there occurred to his imagination a disjointed finger, swollen and discoloured, racked with pains. The question was, How should he reset himself into joint? The body of life for him meant Beatrice, his children, Helena, the Comic Opera, his friends of the orchestra. How could he set himself again into joint with these? It was impossible. Towards his family he would henceforward have to bear himself with humility. That was a cynicism. He would have to leave Helena, which he could not do. He would have to play strenuously, night after night, the music of The Saucy Little Switzer, which was absurd. In fine, it was all absurd and impossible. Very well, then, that being so, what remained possible? Why, to depart. 'If thine hand offend thee, cut it off.' He could cut himself off from life. It was plain and straight-forward. 11

In Sons and Lovers Mrs. Morel experiences moments of communion with the natural world, partly in reaction to her enforced circumstances in the cramped household, and partly as a recognition of perspective, stimulating imaginative response. The first passage quoted above could well be of this kind, but the style of the later novel with its strict adherence to nature as seen by the character in question is diffused here among comparisons that attempt a transformation of Siegmund's dilemma into a structure of natural events, a structure imposed less by Siegmund than by Lawrence himself. Siegmund's presence is mentioned three times only. The reader is offered no continuous insight into his response, just as Lawrence's construction of the scene hardly maintains contact with the events described. Siegmund watches with wonder and delight, yet the scene is given sardonic overtones. As day advances, the sun's laughing to itself interferes with the reader's sense of actuality, which is further strained by comparisons built up beyond the point where they can happily coexist. The pink butterflies of sunrise hover ultimately in front of a mouse, the moon. No other reason supports the 'fields of darkness' as 'mown', twice repeated, except that this word might, to a tolerant reader, suggest thick-scented darkness. But to respond correctly to the final image of the dead mouse floating on water, the reader would have to abandon his visual apprehension, which has elsewhere been strongly invited only to be finally confused. The image of the net in which the mouse is caught at first does not accord with this final image, nor with the cat which hunts it. Throughout, the general impression of awe and of vastness is dispelled by extravagant confusion.

The second passage is also highly metaphorical, not least in placing the dawn scene as a 'peep-show', a 'piece'. Here, as on other occasions in The Trespasser, Lawrence appears to be condemning the indulgence of fancy, even though it were, as in this case, his own. It is associated with Helena, yet her attractions thus depleted unbalance the story. Convincingly, Siegmund finds all distractions disgusting, and his thoughts receive greater authenticity in so doing. His image for himself as: 'a limb out of joint from the body of life', is developed through to the end of the passage, acquiring strength through the list of painful, practical situations it illuminates. The last sentences, with their biblical quotation, complete the process that has never distracted the reader from Siegmund's subjective response, and nowhere abandoned its purposeful, intransigent sense of the facts.

II

The facts of Lawrence's own life at this time are not far removed from the alienation expressed by Siegmund in the second passage above. The sense of separation from daily life and of futility in personal relationships are familiar from Sons and Lovers, and it is not surprising that Lawrence's third novel was to be an autobiographical and exploratory one. The descriptions of family life in the final chapters of The Trespasser as well as the occasions of imaginative presentation where the central character faces and understands his dilemma proved more successful than the attempt merely to rewrite borrowed material, and are the growing points which The White Peacock had temporarily concealed. While

aspects of style resemble Lawrence's first novel, others show, whether deliberately or not, a rejection of it. Before finishing The Trespasser Lawrence had already begun to examine the situation of a family united by the mother against the father in 'Odour of Chrysanthemums'. This story, in dealing with autobiographical facts, and in attempting to portray imaginative response throughout the three versions, exemplifies the Sons and Lovers period and its significant changes. It is here that new sympathies began to appear in Lawrence's work, and it is important if we are to understand his later development to grasp their implications:

The tears in her mother's voice made the child sob bitterly. Vera and Marjorie sat silent at table. The steak and mashed potatoes steamed and grew cold.¹²

In each of its three versions, 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' portrays a similar situation to the one described in the above sentences, where Siegmund returns to face his domestic circumstances. In the short story, Elizabeth Bates, the mother of two young children, consolidates the household by alienating the father who, in this case, has supposedly rejected the family meal in favour of the public house. Walter Bates, a miner, occupies the same position as Walter Morel, transformed from a man into an object by the wife's imaginative evaluation of him and of her own convinced superiority. Like Gertrude Morel, she transmits this evaluation to her children, who accept it without question.

While the meal waits on the table, the children try to distract themselves from the troublesome atmosphere until, once they are in

12. The Trespasser, p. 162.

bed, Elizabeth's anger changes to fear, and hearing the pit head machinery ominously at work, she goes to make enquiries about her husband at a neighbour's house. Having found he is not out drinking, she returns, whereupon Walter's mother arrives with news of a pit accident. Walter has been killed and the story ends with the wife and mother laying out the body. Not until the third and final version of the story, which belongs to the post Sons and Lovers period, does Lawrence write in such a way as to allow Elizabeth to discover the real tragedy that has occurred.

The chronology and direction of Lawrence's minor changes to the story, mainly executed between the earliest proof version and that subsequently published in The English Review, have already been well examined. In James Boulton's view: '...all the changes tend in one direction: to concentrate attention on the absent Bates and his wife's tense anger at his lateness. In his revisions of the early parts of the tale, Lawrence was preparing for the deepened, more purposive exploration of the adult emotions aroused by the climax.'¹³ Impact and economy distinguish the proof corrections in these early parts from the original proof text, which contained, as well as some over-emphasis of description, a passage of ninety lines in length depicting the fireside games the children play in their attempt to relieve the tension while they wait. As in The White Peacock, the early version of the story shows Lawrence much concerned to present 'the things and happenings' with a corresponding avoidance of 'theme', while a shortening of sentence and descriptive phrase during the first revision, which was carried still further in the

13. James Boulton, Renaissance and Modern Studies, Nottingham, (1969). Vol. XIII, p. 9. .

second, achieves a prose style closer to that of Sons and Lovers.

The following extracts serve to illustrate the direction of the revisions:

The children had their hands and faces wiped with a flannel, and were undressed on the hearthrug. They were very quiet. When they had put on their nightdresses, they knelt down, and the girl hid her face in her mother's lap, and the boy put his face in his mother's skirt at the side, and they said their prayers, the boy mumbling. She looked down at them, at the brown silken bush of intertwining curls in the nape of the girl's neck, and the little black head of the boy, and in front of her eyes shone love and pity, and close behind pity stood anger, with shadowy hate, like a phantom, and scorn; glittering and dangerous; all these on the darkened stage of the mother's soul, with pity and love in front. The children hid their faces in her skirts, and were full of comfort and safety, and they prayed to her, for she was the God of their prayers. Then she lighted the candle and took them to bed.¹⁴

The children had their hands and faces wiped with a flannel. They were very quiet. When they had put on their nightdresses, they said their prayers, the boy mumbling. The mother looked down at them, at the brown silken bush of intertwining curls in the nape of the girl's neck, at the little black head of the lad, and her heart burst with anger at their father who caused all three such distress. The children hid their faces in her skirts for comfort.¹⁵

One might think that the staged arrangement of love, pity, anger and scorn, in the first version, is stylistically similar to the dramatisation of feelings that can be found in a number of early poems. But the images here do not proceed from Elizabeth's own dramatic construction of the scene, transformed in the mind's eye, but from Lawrence's. Nor would Elizabeth have gained from seeing her scorn and hate 'on the darkened stage of (her) soul, with pity and love in front.' The writing seems fanciful because it does

14. 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', Proof Version, 1910.

15. The English Review Version, 1911; and The Prussian Officer, 1914, p. 211.

not support the imaginative process working purposefully within the character, but seems instead imposed from an outside source. The images are simply an extra version of the events we already see, added to the narrative. By cutting imagery from the narrative, which largely accounts for the difference between the two passages, Lawrence allowed his imaginative formulations of the story to be worked out through the characters and their responses, so that brevity in the early parts would make the full concentration upon Elizabeth's reaction to her husband's dead body a natural step.

The situation of the mother influencing her children in denial of the father is one which Lawrence knew to be true of his own family childhood, and which during the Sons and Lovers period he also made known to his readers. An understanding of imaginative response can help us to grasp the effective nature of such an influence, and to realise that at this time Lawrence himself was a learner in this sphere also. The three versions of 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' differ most strikingly in their endings, as Lawrence's exploration of the mother's response to the dead husband deepens and extends. Even in the 1910 version of the story, the character of Elizabeth shows stronger similarities to Mrs. Morel than to earlier heroines whose imaginative powers rest too often upon their ability to play the piano or dominate others in discussions of art and literature. Elizabeth, however, is a practical woman, expert in household matters, her children's proper upbringing, and the moral decline of her husband. The fabric of the story differs again from earlier prose works in that a mother's power to influence her children's reactions by showing them her own is now directly treated. When her little girl admires the forgotten

chrysanthemum flower in Elizabeth's apron band, she retorts: 'It was chrysanthemums when I married him, and chrysanthemums when you were born, and the first time they ever brought him home drunk, he'd got brown chrysanthemums in his button-hole.'¹⁶ No other sentence could underline more simply the nature of Elizabeth's mind and its capacity to build up symbols out of impressions; collecting together the dominant associations chrysanthemums have for her, she extracts from these the essence, the odour, reminiscent as it has always been of the turning points in her married life, the most recent being: 'the first time they brought him home drunk'. It is an odour therefore, of steepening disillusionment, but it also alerts us to Elizabeth's own mentality: her retentive memory and her inclination to judge. These two qualities, which she supposes to be her greatest strength, her moral innocence, and which are doubtless imaginative in nature and purpose, finally prove to be her source of destruction. If Lawrence's revisions of the earlier parts of the story successfully expose this source, the rewritten endings mark a further step, the attempted evaluation of its effects.

The first ending to 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' was not published in Lawrence's lifetime, but belongs to the first proof copy stamped with the mark 'Ballantyne & Co. Ltd, Tavistock Street, London, 10.3.10.', printers of The English Review. In December 1909 Lawrence sent two stories to the Review, one of which is now thought to have been 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', and the text of which, as it appears in the proof, constitutes the earliest version of the story. The second version consists of Lawrence's corrections to this printed text, many of which were too extensive to be

16. The Prussian Officer, p. 210.

inserted in the margin, but were written out by the author on additional pages. The second version appeared in The English Review in June 1911, with slight changes between the corrected text and its published form. The third version was published in The Prussian Officer (1914) after Lawrence had revised the story a second time between April and December of 1913, during which period he was also working on The Rainbow. The ending to the story contained by far the greatest amount of revised material.¹⁷ The first two endings can be considered together as having been written prior to Sons and Lovers, which was completed during the late months of 1912, while the third was written after it, during the spring and summer of 1913.

The first two endings are similar in the following respects. First, in both Elizabeth supports the loathing she felt towards her husband in life by pity and even admiration for him in death. In washing his body she cleans away all her unpleasant impressions of him, which would have continued had he come home drunk, leaving him youthful looking, morally as well as physically unsoiled. Secondly, Lawrence attempts to bring out the jealous feelings between Elizabeth and old Mrs. Bates, as each fights to occupy the position of mother over a wayward but now submissive child. Thirdly, in neither version does contact with her husband's dead body shock Elizabeth out of her sense of moral superiority. To sum up these similarities, the appearance of death encourages Elizabeth to maintain the dominant role she occupied during her married life, and somehow transforms her living, imperfect husband into a dead, perfect one. What she saw, and the thoughts prompted by it, remain the author's responsibility, but his choice in this case was not simply

17. The Prussian Officer, p. 221 onwards.

a random one.

By the third and final version of the ending, Lawrence, through Elizabeth's reactions, emphasised not the appearance of death, in which her superiority was vindicated, but the nature of a so-called married life in which one party's capacity for imaginative response could dominate and destroy its equal, but opposite, way of feeling in the other. This final version provides a touchstone whereby the two earlier ones may be examined. Once the miner's body has been brought home and placed on the parlour floor, the two women begin to lay him out:

When they rose and looked at him lying naked in the beauty of death, the women experienced suddenly the same feeling; that of motherhood, mixed with some primeval awe. But the pitiful mother-feeling prevailed. Elizabeth knelt down and put her arms round him, and laid her cheek on his breast. His mother had his face between her hands again, and was murmuring and sobbing. Elizabeth touched him and kissed him with her cheek and her lips. Then suddenly she felt jealous that the old woman had his face.

She rose, and went into the kitchen, where she poured some warm water into a bowl, and brought soap and flannel and a towel.

(1910 Proof Version)

When they arose, saw him lying in the reckless dignity of death, both women bowed in primeval awe, while the tears of motherhood rose in each. For a few moments they stood religiously silent. Then the mother feelings prevailed. Elizabeth knelt down, put her arms round him, laid her cheek on his breast. He was still warm, for the mine was hot where he had died. His mother had his face between her hands, and was murmuring incoherently. The tears fell in succession, as drops from wet leaves; the old woman was not weeping. Elizabeth embraced the body of her husband, with cheek and lips. Suddenly, she felt jealous that the old woman held his head. She rose, went into the kitchen, where she poured warm water into a bowl, brought soap and flannel to wash him and a soft towel.

(1910 corrections to
Proof Version)

When they arose, saw him lying in the naive dignity of death, the women stood arrested in fear and respect. For a few moments they remained still, looking down, the old mother

whimpering. Elizabeth felt countermanded. She saw him, how utterly inviolable he lay in himself. She had nothing to do with him. She could not accept it. Stooping, she laid her hand on him, in claim. He was still warm, for the mine was hot where he had died. His mother had his face between her hands, and was murmuring incoherently. The old tears fell in succession as drops from wet leaves; the mother was not weeping, merely her tears flowed. Elizabeth embraced the body of her husband, with cheek and lips. She seemed to be listening, inquiring, trying to get some connexion. But she could not. She was driven away. He was impregnable.

She rose, went in to the kitchen, where she poured warm water into a bowl, brought soap and flannel and a soft towel.

(1913, Final Version)¹⁸

The second sentence of the 1910 Proof Version had been crossed out, only to be reinstated in the proof corrections Lawrence added on a separate page. Its reference to 'the pitiful mother-feeling' was causing Lawrence some indecision, yet revising the proofs, he let it stand. In both the early versions, this feeling was named, but not explored. And the sentence suggests that some dramatisation of the conflict between the two feelings, motherhood and awe, had been attempted. The same kind of dramatisation had occurred earlier when Elizabeth's anger and scorn: '(stood) on the darkened stage of the mother's soul, with pity and love in front.' The actual dynamics of the conflict, however, are lacking, and since the forces that, as in the poems, bring images into being through a process of emotional realisation are not purposefully employed, the result is stylistic weakness, a failure to explore the emotion with sufficient concentration for it to be thoroughly understood and its dynamic relationship with other emotions clearly established. Irrelevancy of detail, and a temptation to carry on the narrative and avoid the emotions, support this weakness in the first two

18. The Prussian Officer, p. 221.

versions, both of which maintain an impression of vagueness, and suggest that Lawrence had paid insufficient attention to the feelings of the characters, preferring instead to describe their actions. While the corrections include the same unexplained actions as the Proof, where Elizabeth touches and kisses the body, the sentence: 'He was still warm...', added in revision, offers us a closer acquaintance with the situation than the other details. What Elizabeth thinks to herself we are not told, yet the sentence brings to mind the actual sense of his flesh as it felt to her hand. It makes the impressionable part of her mind available to us, while convincing us, by its factual interest, that the author was well informed.

It is ironic that the closer, more intimate and thoroughly rendered the response, the stronger the feeling for the seen object as something strange and inviolable becomes. In the 1913 version of the above passage, no detail or action is described without it being linked to the one predominant emotion which Elizabeth experiences. Her visual impression of her husband's separateness from herself, his object-like inertia, causes her to lay her hand on him 'in claim'. No mention of jealousy or maternal affection now interferes, for if, as in earlier parts of the story, Elizabeth's role as mother had dominated, and the moral judgements she maintained by her superior imaginative gifts had dominated, here they are rejected. Yet only when those gifts are fully used, is her mistake realised. Her embrace of the body is now explained, not merely reported, as an act of enquiry: 'She seemed to be listening, inquiring, trying to get some connection.' Elizabeth is perplexed, and as her long-hardened conclusions about her husband dissolve away, she must

reopen her mind in an act of rediscovery.

In certain respects, Paul Morel's response to his mother's dead body resembles that of Elizabeth Bates to her husband's, as presented in the 1910 version of the story. In the novel, as in the early 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', the dead person appears to be still alive. Death has merely restored to the features an aspect of innocence, of unstained hope. Old Mrs. Bates remarks how Walter looks: 'clear as a twelvemonth baby...peaceful as sleep...smiling a bit.' Mrs. Morel: 'lay like a girl asleep and dreaming of her love...her brow clear and white as if life had never touched it... She was young again.' Kissing her Paul finds that her mouth is cold. 'He bit his lip with horror.'¹⁹ This discovery, that the appearance is false and the truth unflattering to the wishes of the person who mourns, does not occur in 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' until 1913. In the Final Version, Lawrence allows Mrs. Bates her previous observations, but reserves for Elizabeth an ulterior awareness of the fact of death, which is stressed repeatedly by the narrative:

They worked thus in silence for a long time, lovingly, with meticulous care. Sometimes they forgot it was death, and the touch of the man's body gave them strange thrills, different in each of the women; secret thrills that made them turn one from the other, and left them with a keen sadness.

At last it was finished. He was a man of handsome figure and genial face, which showed traces of the disfigurement of drink. He was blonde, full-fleshed, with fine round limbs.

(1910 Proof Version, uncorrected)

They worked thus in silence for a long time. They never forgot it was death, and the touch of the man's dead body gave them strange emotions, different in each of the women; a great dread possessed them both, the mother felt the lie was given to her womb, she was denied; the wife felt the utter isolation of the human soul, the child within her was a weight apart from her.

19. Sons and Lovers, p. 485.

At last it was finished. He was a man of handsome body, and his face showed no traces of drink. He was blond, full-fleshed, with fine limbs. But he was dead.

(1913 Final Version)²⁰

A silent parenthesis (who killed him?), added after the final sentence above, would explain the tone of accusation one can detect, when the attractiveness of the man, eminently suited to be alive, is weighed against the fact that he is dead. The emphasis on death: 'They never forgot...the man's dead body... But he was dead', strengthens Elizabeth's approaching realisation that, while a change has occurred in her attitude to her husband, no change has occurred at all in her relationship with him. He is as isolated now as he ever was. Paul wishes his mother had never suffered an intolerable marriage; Elizabeth wishes her real husband had been a man she could admire and love. By stressing the dead body at a point where she might have allowed herself such an illusion, Lawrence confirms the position from which she can only proceed towards the truth.

Since the truth was elusive and important, Lawrence's attempts to present Elizabeth's response caused him to make extensive and drastic changes between all three versions. The Proof Version ends with a single paragraph in which Elizabeth's thoughts are given, while the Proof Corrections and the Final Version were considerably lengthened. Because of the rhythmical sequence of sentences in Lawrence's prose, each version of the ending is quoted below virtually in full:

20. The Prussian Officer, p. 221-2.

Elizabeth, who had sobbed herself weary, looked up. Then she put her arms round him, and kissed him again on the smooth ripples below the breasts, and held him to her. She loved him very much now -so beautiful, and gentle, and helpless. He must have suffered! What he must have suffered! Her tears started hot again. Ah, she was so sorry, sorrier than she could ever tell. She was sorry for him, that he had suffered so, and got lost in the dark places of death. But the poignancy of her grief was that she loved him again -ah, so much! She did not want him to wake up, she did not want him to speak. She had him again, now, and it was Death which had brought him. She kissed him, so that she might kiss Death which had taken the ugly things from him. Think how he might have come home - not white and beautiful, gently smiling... Ugly, befouled, with hateful words on an evil breath, reeking with disgust. She loved him so much now; her life was mended again, and her faith looked up with a smile; he had come home to her, beautiful. How she had loathed him! It was strange he could have been such as he had been. How wise of death to be so silent! If he spoke, even now, her anger and her scorn would lift their heads like fire. He would not speak -no, just gently smile, with wide eyes. She was sorry to have to disturb him to put on his shirt -but she must, he could not lie like that. The shirt was aired by now. But it would be cruel hard work to get him into it. He was so heavy, and helpless, more helpless than a baby, poor dear! -and so beautiful.

(1910 Proof Version)

Elizabeth looked up. The man's mouth was fallen back, slightly open, under the cover of the moustache. The eyes, open, did not show glazed by the small candle-light. His wife looked at him. He seemed to be dreaming back, half awake. Life with its smoky burning gone from him, had left a purity and a candour like an adolescent's moulded upon his reverie. His intrinsic beauty was evident now. She had not been mistaken in him as often she had bitterly confessed to herself she was. The beauty of his youth, of his eighteen years, of the time when life had settled on him, as in adolescence, it settles on youth, bringing a mission to fulfil and equipment therefor, this beauty shone almost unstained again. It was this adolescent 'he', the young man looking round to see which way, that Elizabeth had loved. He had come from the discipleship of youth, through the Pentecost of adolescence, pledged to keep with honor his own individuality, to be steadily and unquenchably himself, electing his own masters and serving them till the wages were won. He betrayed himself in his search for amusement. Let Education teach us to amuse ourselves, necessity will train us to work. Once out of the pit, there was nothing to interest this man. He sought the public house, where, by paying the price of his own integrity, he found amusement, destroying the clamours for activity, because he knew not what form the activities might take. The miner turned miscreant to himself, easing the ache of dissatisfaction by destroying that part of him which ached. Little

by little, the recreant maimed and destroyed himself.

It was this recreant his wife had hated so bitterly, had fought against so strenuously. She had strove all the years of his falling off, strove with all her force to save the man she had known, new bucklered with beauty and strength. In a wild and bloody passion she fought the recreant. Now this lay killed, the clean young knight was brought home dead to her. Elizabeth bowed her head upon the body and wept.

She put her arms round him, kissed the smooth ripples below his breasts, bowed her forehead on him in submission. Faithful to her deeper sense of honor, she uttered no word of sorrow in her heart. Upright in soul are women, however they bow the swerving body. She owned the beauty of the blow.

And all the while her heart was bursting with grief and pity for him. What had he suffered? What stretch of horror for this helpless man! She wept herself almost in agony. She had not been able to help him. Never again would she be able to do anything for him. It was a grief unutterable to think that now all was over between them. Even if it were a case of meeting in the next world, he would not need her there, it would be different. She saw the great episode of her life with him closed, and grief was a passion. The old mother was hushed in awe. Often she, the elder, less honourable woman, had said: 'She drives him to it, she makes him ten thousand times worse.' But now the mother bowed down in respect for the wife. As the passion of Elizabeth's grief grew more, the old woman shrank and tried to avoid it.

...He was so heavy, and helpless, more helpless than a baby fallen heavily asleep. They had to struggle with him as if he were a rebellious child. This made Elizabeth's heart weep again.

Yet more joy was mixed in her emotion than she knew. He might have come home ugly, befouled, so that she would have had a loathly strange creature to combat. Ah, how she had fought that him, the disfigured coward which gradually replaced her man. How wise of death to be so silent. Even now her fear could not trust him to speak. Yet he was restored to her, fair, unblemished fresh for the splendour of a fine fight. She thanked God for it, and her heart exulted. Ah, he was so beautiful for the re-issuing into the next life.

(1910 Corrections to Proof Version)

Elizabeth looked up. The man's mouth was fallen back, slightly open under the cover of the moustache. The eyes, half shut, did not show glazed in the obscurity. Life with its smoky burning gone from him, had left him apart and utterly alien to her. And she knew what a stranger he was to her. In her womb was ice of fear, because of this separate stranger with whom she had been living as one flesh. Was this what it all meant - utter, intact separateness, obscured by heat of living? In dread she turned her face away. The face was too deadly. There had been nothing between them, and yet they had come together, exchanging their nakedness repeatedly. Each time he had taken her, they had been two isolated beings, far apart as

now. He was no more responsible than she. The child was like ice in her womb. For as she looked at the dead man, her mind, cold and detached, said clearly: 'Who am I? What have I been doing? I have been fighting a husband who did not exist. He existed all the time. What wrong have I done? What was that I have been living with? There lies the reality, this man.' And her soul died in her for fear: she knew she had never seen him, he had never seen her, they had met in the dark and had fought in the dark, not knowing whom they met nor whom they fought. And now she saw, and turned silent in seeing. For she had been wrong. She had said he was something he was not; she had felt familiar with him. Whereas he was apart all the while, living as she had never lived, feeling as she never felt.

In fear and shame she looked at his naked body, that she had known falsely. And he was the father of her children. Her soul was torn from her body and stood apart. She looked at his naked body and was ashamed, as if she had denied it. After all, it was itself. It seemed awful to her. She looked at his face, and she turned her own face to the wall. For his look was other than hers, his way was not her way. She had denied him what he was - she saw it now. She had refused him as himself. And this had been her life, and his life. She was grateful to death, which restored the truth. And she knew she was not dead.

And all the while her heart was bursting with grief and pity for him. What had he suffered? What stretch of horror for this helpless man! She was rigid with agony. She had not been able to help him. He had been cruelly injured, this naked man, this other being, and she could make no reparation. There were the children - but the children belonged to life. This dead man had nothing to do with them. He and she were only channels through which life had flowed to issue in the children. She was a mother - but how awful she knew it now to have been a wife. And he, dead now, how awful he must have felt it to be a husband. She felt that in the next world he would be a stranger to her. If they met there, in the beyond, they would only be ashamed of what had been before. The children had come, for some mysterious reason, out of both of them. But the children did not unite them. Now he was dead, she knew how eternally he was apart from her, how eternally he had nothing more to do with her. She saw this episode of her life closed. They had denied each other in life. Now he had withdrawn. An anguish came over her. It was finished then: it had become hopeless between them long before he died. Yet he had been her husband. But how little!

...She was almost ashamed to handle him; what right had she or any one to lay hands on him; but her touch was humble on his body. It was hard work to clothe him. He was so heavy and inert. A terrible dread gripped her all the while: that he could be so heavy and utterly inert, unresponsive, apart. The horror of the distance between them was almost too much for her - it was so infinite a gap she must look across.

At last it was finished. They covered him with a sheet and left him lying, with his face bound. And she fastened the

door of the little parlour, lest the children should see what was lying there. Then, with peace sunk heavy on her heart, she went about making tidy the kitchen. She knew she submitted to life, which was her immediate master. But from death, her ultimate master, she winced with fear and shame.

(Final Version 1913)₂₁

The underlined phrases in the second of the three passages are those Lawrence retained, partially or completely, in the Final Version. Those of the first also point forward to Elizabeth's expressions of guilt. Here however, it is not clear whether the suffering she pities refers to the moments of death or the unhappy period of married life, though the phrase 'the dark places of death' suggests the former. In the Proof Corrections, her guilt feelings are approached more decisively, even though they do not form the bulk of Lawrence's analysis. There, the reference to Bates' suffering implies that it is Elizabeth who is responsible, rather than the pangs of death. 'She had not been able to help him.' This portion of the passage is retained and strengthened.

In both the Proof Version and the Proof Corrections nevertheless, Elizabeth's illusions are sustained. We are given no idea of what kind of man Walter Bates was, even though Elizabeth supposes him the subject of her thoughts. In the Proof we see someone she can be a mother to, whom she can have power over. She is engaged, not in imaginative discovery attempting to resolve her perplexed state of mind, but in confirming an already existing impression of Bates as her inferior. She can project this image onto his dead body without his rising again to challenge her and being beaten down. Unlike her counterpart in Lawrence's dramatic version of the

2¹. The Prussian Officer, Pp. 222 - 224.

story, The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd,²² tempted to suppose her husband would be better dead, she suffers no hint of shame. In the corrections, all we see through Elizabeth's eyes is the kind of mate who would have been ideal for her: 'the young man looking round to see which way,' 'a knight, faithful and adventurous, who will keep his lady in the accustomed manner. There is no great step from this image to Miriam's Walter Scott heroes, or Mrs. Morel's; 'sons in two great centres of industry', yet only during and after Sons and Lovers had these ghosts been laid. They represent prototypes of the imaginative hero, offered here in its most questionable form. But the questions Elizabeth might have asked are obliterated at once by Lawrence's superfluous commentary on the evils of drink.

Despite the two opening sentences of the corrections, Lawrence fails to keep us in touch with Elizabeth's response, so that as readers we are not convincingly persuaded that her reactions were as we are told they are. Her thoughts arising as a result do not seem to belong to her but to the narrator. Many are contradictory in an unhelpful way, as Lawrence tells us how: 'faithful to her deep sense of honour she uttered no word of sorrow in her heart', and yet: 'and all the while her breast was bursting in grief and pity for him', although later: 'Yet more joy was mixed with sorrow than she knew.' The adjectives 'wild' and 'bloody' likewise do not accord with Elizabeth and what we know of her, nor is it easy to accept that a child: 'fallen heavily asleep', could be described in the same moment, and for the same reasons, as 'rebellious'.

22. She finally admits to having 'murdered' Holroyd but a thorough statement of her attitude is avoided. The play was written in Croydon. See, R. Williams' Introduction, D.H. Lawrence, Three Plays. pp. 9-10.

In the manner of an augur, Lawrence may have been casting about for a solution to the dilemma of Elizabeth's feelings, but until he had placed her entire quality of mind and form of thinking into perspective, a true evaluation was not possible. It entailed, on Lawrence's part, the fullest use of that same quality as Elizabeth herself possesses. The delicate structure of observation, thought, and discovery, through images derived from response to the outer world, whereby Lawrence, as novelist and as poet, explored his experience, collapses whenever he allows extraneous moral judgements to answer for him, even if these were previously his own. Elizabeth's own moral judgements would be and were damaging for the same reasons, but Lawrence did not discover this until 1913, after Sons and Lovers, when the dilemma of the imaginative mind, confronted by its hero, was fully exposed.

An element of surprise, even of shock, attends Elizabeth's discovery, in the Final Version of the ending, that her previous judgements of Bates have been mistaken. The careful, appropriate attention to observations, as to thoughts, recorded immediately they happen, and in the form in which they strike Elizabeth, enables the reader to understand and share the conclusions she reaches, just as one can share the perceptions and conflicts of Lawrence's successful early poems. Impressions are caught up together to develop images, and by contrasting qualities meanings emerge. 'Life with its smoky burning gone from him', exposes its complementary opposite: 'utter, intact separateness, obscured by heat of living,' together forming heat into an image which, in turn, engages a further opposite, 'in her womb was ice of fear'. While heat is opposed to cold, it also implies darkness, and Elizabeth's mind takes up this thread of

images as she is thrust forward towards realisation. Darkness now implies the actual, though obscured, relationship with her husband as one of mutual isolation and unseen contact. 'They had met in the dark and fought in the dark', stages this relationship in image terms, while incorporating background impressions of the room, shaded and dark, where the body is laid. As these images structure a series of contrasts, the style of the passage follows the same pattern. A word or phrase, as in: 'They had met...', is repeated in opposing sentences: 'In dread she turned her face away. The face was too deadly... She looked at his face, and turned her face to the wall... There had been nothing between them, and yet they had come together... Whereas he had been apart all the while, living as she never lived, feeling as she never felt.' As Elizabeth thinks back over her married life, she considers the history of the relationship. That too was one of contrasts. It is as if the pattern of her thinking itself becomes realised in her conclusions. The ultimate contrast between life and death, 'her ultimate master', has emerged stage by stage from the observations at the beginning of the passage. From considerations of what is 'immediate', the pattern of that which is ultimate becomes exposed.

Lawrence's treatment of Paul's feelings at the end of Sons and Lovers resembles the contrasts found in the 1913 ending of 'Odour of Chrysanthemums.' 'He was with her still. They were together. But yet there was his body, his chest, that leaned against the stile ... So much, and himself, infinitesimal, at the core a nothingness, and yet not nothing.' In both cases, the central character is made aware, almost involuntarily, of another quality of life than that which they have lived by. Paul has searched for it in vain,

but will not surrender to hopelessness. In facing the body of her husband, Elizabeth discovers that his way of feeling was one she had previously denied.

In 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' Lawrence was doing far more than simply documenting aspects of English working class life that he knew well, though without this achievement, anything else would hardly have been possible. The story is different from The White Peacock in that Lawrence now presents a situation close to that of his own background. It differs from The Trespasser in its thorough analysis and evaluation of imaginative response, and from both, by combining analysis with autobiographical material. His treatment of the imaginative process would not allow him to be satisfied with those two endings to the story in which the mother's judgement upon her husband fails to include a profound criticism of herself. Although with Sons and Lovers and 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' Lawrence applied the same kind of analysis to characters in fiction that he had already given mainly to himself in his early poems, the story takes this analysis one step further than the novel. The third ending moves beyond Sons and Lovers in having as its central relationship not that of mother and son, but husband and wife. Finally, in Elizabeth Bates' reverence for her husband as someone whose sense of self contrasted so effectively with her own, the way was cleared for Lawrence to explore new forms of response. In the next chapter I shall discuss the effects of this discovery on Lawrence's style and presentation of character, by reference to two subsequent stories, 'Daughters of the Vicar' and 'The Prussian Officer'.

CHAPTER FIVE: Morality and Immorality: 'Daughters of the Vicar';
'The Prussian Officer.'

In the previous chapter the word 'extraneous'¹ was used to imply the danger to Lawrence's works of fiction of a moral code not incorporated into the narrative, style and development of character, but forced upon the material by the novelist. After quoting Lawrence's well-known remark on morality, novels, and novelists, Frank Kermode added a final comment on Women in Love:

'Philosophy, religion, science, they are all of them nailing things down, to get a stable equilibrium... But the novel, no... If you try to nail anything down, in the novel, either it kills the novel, or the novel gets up and walks away with the nail. Morality in the novel is the trembling instability of the balance. When the novelist puts his thumb in the scale, to pull down the balance to his own predilection, that is immorality... And of all the art forms, the novel most of all demands the trembling and oscillating of the balance.'

Women in Love has this instability. In life Lawrence was, it might seem, dangerously unstable at the time of its writing; but the book is unstable in exactly the sense he exigently demands of novels that are true, not false. The 'metaphysic' was important to him, and, as he believed, to everybody; he could not enact primary human relationships without putting it in. Yet to be effective it must not be programmatic; whatever got through to the reader would come not from the prescriptions of philosophy or religion, but from a sense of the beneficent instability of the text into which he wove it.²

In his concluding discussion of Women in Love George Ford precedes his remarks with a statement by Leavis:

Even Dr. Leavis, in one of his most candid evaluations of the novel, admitted that he was left 'wondering' by Birkin and Ursula considered 'as a norm.' He concluded that at this point Lawrence 'has been defeated by the difficulty of life: he hasn't solved the problems of the civilisation he analyses.' Often as I find myself in agreement with Dr. Leavis when he discusses Women in Love as a dramatic poem, I am left 'wondering' by the comment I have italicised. Is a novel

1. See Chapter Four, p. 170.
2. Kermode, Lawrence, (1973), p. 75.

supposed to solve our problems for us? Or is it not enough that it should represent them for us?... The question of whether or not a novel can be enjoyed in much the same way as concerts and ballets are enjoyed underlies most of the disagreements about the fiction we read.³

Although Women in Love is the subject at issue here, more general questions are raised about how Lawrence's work, even works of fiction in general, can best be approached. Ford and Kermode join together in warning Leavis off trying to pin down Lawrence's morality, and Lawrence himself seems to be on their side. But Lawrence is, indirectly, arguing in favour of some kind of morality in suggesting that certain novels can be 'immoral'. Good novels, we therefore conclude, are not immoral, or even amoral, but moral, and Lawrence's own attempt to pin them down shows the highest regard for their unique kind of morality. One can never finally be sure that Lawrence did not deliberately withhold a solution to the problems of civilisation in Women in Love, but such a view does not accord with the seriousness of its analysis. It is more likely that certain novels, including Women in Love, Sons and Lovers, and the later parts of The Rainbow, present special difficulties because basic problems remain unsolved by the novelist rather than because creative fiction, the only medium in which they can be fully explored, demands that moral certainty should be avoided.

'Daughters of the Vicar' I shall attempt to show, was written at a time when Lawrence's moral ideas had crystallised, at least temporarily, into certainty and understanding, while the story remained, notwithstanding, a 'moral' work of fiction.

In my discussion of Lawrence's works up to and including

3. Double Measure, p. 217.

Sons and Lovers I have attempted to bring out their dominant strains as a solving process, as an effort to 'solve' problems directly in the poems or by a transposed confrontation with them in the early prose. In both cases, the problem concerned a struggle to order experience, to dramatise opposing impulses through images, and to ask what quality of thinking best leads to an understanding of life and to individual fulfilment. In these early works, a favourable interest is always shown towards the imaginative hero or heroine. If the novelist considered their qualities to be of doubtful value, as in the case of Lettie, Helena, or Mrs. Morel and Miriam, a residue of doubt that he did not quite know why, remains with the reader. A sense of 'real touch', of 'the quiet flow of touch',⁴ such as Lawrence came to admire in the Etruscan way of life, was often missing from their reactions to life or to other characters, or overwhelmed by the urgency with which they formed impressions and made judgements. Elizabeth Bates's earlier judgement on her husband becomes, at his death, a judgement upon herself. In tending the body, she realises that she has killed in herself long ago the intimacy and feeling of contact for which, and through which, value and truth need to be acknowledged. Where body and mind have followed divergent paths, where two ways of seeing, that of onlooker and that of participant are dissociated, the outcome would be their facing each other as opposites.⁵ The Final Version of 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' presents the reader with an image for such opposition, as well as revealing its tragic effects on the lives of the characters concerned. But the revelation had

4. See Introduction: note: 17.

5. Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places: p. 55.

not been successful, as the earlier versions show, until body and mind were brought together in the presentation and style of Lawrence's analysis. The authenticity of Elizabeth's final discovery, as distinct from her earlier reactions, rests on the given issues Lawrence had been exploring previous to this achievement. The moral viewpoint expressed there is not extraneous but intrinsic to Lawrence's presentation of the characters, which, while showing no trace of the novelist's 'thumb' in the scales, remains 'moral' in the sense Lawrence uses the word.

As both onlooker and participant, Elizabeth discovers an opposition between two ways of feeling, yet these are not, in her response as it finally happens, totally opposed. They only had been earlier in her married life, where reverence for the body and bodily reactions, had been denied. Once the opposition between body and mind are reconciled, her ability to think in images and to reach a conclusion is not destructive but creative even though it has happened too late in her married life to be of real help to her. The opposition then, is between elements that could be mutually supporting. An imaginative mind relying for its judgements upon the deeper, intuitive reactions of the body, Lawrence first presented in the final version of 'Odour of Chrysanthemums.' Not until Women in Love and the later parts of The Rainbow were further problems attempted, further solutions sought, while the two stories I have now chosen to examine exemplify a period of calm in the development of imaginative response.

II

In both versions of 'Daughters of the Vicar' Alfred Durant, the miner and eventual husband of the Vicar's second daughter, Louisa, is recommended to us as a character of some moral value and attractiveness. The elder daughter's husband, Mr. Massy,⁶ is by contrast an unsympathetic figure, physically and morally. Both Alfred and Mr. Massy are exemplary, in each version, of opposing value systems, that of onlooker whose 'spiritual' mode of perception results in Mr. Massy's impoverished insight, contrasted against that uniting the onlooker with the participant, in Alfred. Miss Mary, the elder, shares Mr. Massy's disfigured response to life, while Louisa's, altogether more widely alert and self-revealing, leads her to Alfred. In this story Lawrence continues his expressed intention to 'take two couples and develop their relationships.'⁷ But in the 1913 version, the conflict of moral values found between the two relationships has been grasped by the author to the extent that he may now document the conflict previous explorations had approached in uncertainty. Alfred Durant succeeds Paul Morel, Siegmund, and Elizabeth Bates, as a hero whose imaginative gifts are no longer questionable and self-destructive. The appreciation of Alfred is confirmed clearly by the character of Louisa who, like him, is an advocate of a new, complex mode of perception.

The Alfred of 'Two Marriages' already possessed significant qualities that predict the later hero:

6. The spelling of the clergyman's name was altered from 'Massey' 1911, to 'Massy', 1913.

7. See Chapter Two, note 42.

As a boy, Alfred had been spoiled: him alone of all her children (his mother) spoiled. He was gentle, and, somehow, full of native honour. On the other hand, he had grown ungovernably passionate and unconsciously selfish. Like the other boys, he had wilfully insisted on going into the pit as soon as he left school. This had been a trouble to her. He had never drunk, however, and had never liked women's society, preferring his own company on the whole... He was 31 years old and had never had a sweetheart; not because he was timid or a ninny, but because he had never turned his thoughts to a girl, being never in a position to marry while his mother needed and monopolised him... Miss Louisa did not concern herself seriously with him, because he seemed such a lad, amiable and clean, but innocent of the dark and bitter side of life, which was her important side.⁸

Lawrence wrote 'Two Marriages' after the first two versions of 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' but before the final working out of Sons and Lovers. Alfred, above, is like Paul in the early parts of the novel, too absorbed by his mother to respond sexually to other women. He also resembles George Saxton in being 'innocent of the dark and bitter side of life' which was the important side to Lettie Beardsall, as to Louisa. It is this aspect of life which stimulates imaginative response, yet even though he suffered from strong maternal influence, Alfred is shown lacking in this respect and is described instead as 'ungovernably passionate and unconsciously selfish.' The two qualities of passionate feeling and allegiance to a mother who despises the mine and is possessive and ambitious, could not be properly linked until the differences between them had been thoroughly explored. As facets of a single character they do not at this stage ring true. How can Alfred be both 'gentle' and 'ungovernably passionate'? How does the latter accord with his never by the age of thirty one having:

8. 'Two Marriages'. This story was first published in Time and Tide, 24th March, 1934. It was written, according to Keith Sagar, The Art of D.H. Lawrence, by September 1911.

'turned his thoughts to a girl'? In 'Two Marriages' Louisa accepts him still with some Lettie-like misgiving and the story ends indecisively:

'He is very keen sighted, he can see a long way', said Louisa, looking full at his eyes. 'But he can't see into things, he's not introspective. Ah well!'⁹

Lawrence's explorations into maternal dominance, imaginative feeling and its opposite, in Sons and Lovers, bore fruit in the greatly extended treatment given to Alfred in 1913. The vagueness of the earlier portrait: 'He was gentle, and, somehow, full of native honour', was both moral as well as stylistic, for Lawrence had not understood what 'native honour' meant, nor how to combine the working class qualities of George Saxton, Walter Bates and Walter Morel, with imaginative awareness and self-responsibility.¹⁰

Louisa's view of Alfred in 'Two Marriages' as a noble animal, noble but inferior, is merely a continuation of the response to life learnt from her higher class upbringing. The attitudes of the Vicar's family are conveyed to us during the early parts of the narrative and by the sterile reverence shown by them to the repulsive curate Mr. Massy and by Mary the Vicar's eldest daughter. Despite her revulsion, her course is set, but while her decision to marry is made on false grounds, Lawrence's analysis of her motives likewise remains superficial and in the nature of a brisk, brief, abstract account:

He seems (thought Mary) to have been born before his time - the spirit didn't fill into him. He's got all the sense, but none of the understanding. That is why I shudder to be near him.

9. 'Two Marriages'.

10. For a close study of the stylistic changes after Sons and Lovers see M. Kalnins: A Study of Style, D.H. Lawrence's Prussian Officer Tales.

Nevertheless, in a year's time she was married to him. And never, in their courtship and marriage did he kiss her. The religious ideal is self-sacrifice; her parents would have Mary sacrifice herself. In doing so, she practically cut herself off from the rest of the world. People looked at her husband, looked at her, and were shocked. This isolated her, as the little man was isolated. It would need a pathologist to study his mind; hers we can understand.¹¹

Like Elizabeth Bates in the 1910 version of 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' Mary is ruled by an idealism which disfigures her fulfilment. While Elizabeth's rules of conduct prevent her from responding to her husband with new attention, Mary's dissuade her from accepting and recognising the impressions she had received beforehand. In neither of the stories before Sons and Lovers, however, was Lawrence fully able to identify their kind of 'immorality', nor the imbalance in their response, with sufficient confidence to give it dramatic expression. In 'Two Marriages' it is not Louisa but Mary who, with Mr. Massy, visits Alfred's dying father, whereas Lawrence's substitution of Louisa for Mary in 'Daughters of the Vicar' enables the curate's insidiously cool reaction to this emotional scene to be recognised through the eyes of a contrasted character. His difference from the other characters present is therefore given dramatic definition.

The second structural difference between the two versions is that 'Two Marriages' ends before Mrs. Durant dies. The effects of the death on her son were not treated until 1913, after Sons and Lovers. In 'Daughters of the Vicar' there is less doubt than in the novel that the son will survive these effects, and that he will progress beyond his mother towards love for a wife. Elizabeth

11. 'Two Marriages'.

Bates' earlier response to her dead husband, of 'pity' for a 'restless child,' a 'Twelvemonth baby,' underwent similar changes, as the mother-child relationship, dominating previous endings to 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' becomes in revision that of husband and wife. Louisa's response to Alfred in 'Two Marriages' is 'superior' in the same way as Elizabeth's had been superior, and the changes made to the love scenes between Alfred and Louisa, constitute a third major structural difference between the earlier and later versions. Staying to nurse old Mrs. Durant, Louisa is asked if she will serve Alfred his meal and wash his back. He sits down to eat, still in his pit dirt, but the indecisiveness of the early endings to 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', where Lawrence is unsure what the woman's response should be, also occurs in 'Two Marriages':

Down the mine he must eat his food amid stale air and coal dust, and with black hands. What difference did his hands make at home! Miss Louisa served him his dinner. She loved doing it, it was so living, so different from the hateful barrenness at home. It was so personal, to live in this way with people: it seemed to satisfy her. She watched him as he sat for a few moments turned away from his food, looking at the fire, thinking, and he seemed pleasant to her eyes. His black face and arms were strange, his red mouth under the small, trimmed, but very coarse fibred moustache, that looked like coconut fibre, only of a lighter brown, startled her. But in its dirt his face had a kind of nobility, now he was sad and thinking. His coarseness was not repulsive to her, because it would wash off, and for the rest, he was so natural.

(1911. Two Marriages)

He had resumed the old habit of eating before he washed himself. Miss Louisa served his dinner. It was strange and exciting to her. She was strung up tense, trying to understand him and his mother. She watched him as he sat. He was turned away from his food, looking in the fire. Her soul watched him, trying to see what he was. His black face and arms were uncouth, he was foreign. His face was masked black with coal-dust. She could not see him, she could not know him. The brown eyebrows, the steady eyes, the coarse, small moustache above the closed mouth -

these were the only familiar indications. What was he, as he sat there in his pit-dirt? She could not see him, and it hurt her.

(1913. Daughters of the Vicar¹²)

Louisa's exclusion from the Durant household during her stay, revealed through her reaction (as described in the second passage) to Alfred himself, resembles that admitted by Elizabeth in 'Odour of Chrysanthemums'. The last sentence of the second passage, 'She could not see him, and it hurt her' is stylistically similar to those containing Elizabeth's discovery. 'She knew she had never seen him, he had never seen her... The horror of the distance between them was almost too much for her.' Thoughts are built up from observations with repetitive emphasis. The detail of the mouth and the coarse red moustache, instead of merely startling Louisa, is used to locate the meaning of the complete picture she forms of Alfred at this stage of their relationship. As she searches to make contact with him, and simultaneously to identify him, 'these were the only familiar indications.' Her emotional distance from him is further stressed by Lawrence's use of the definite article, 'The brown eyebrows, the steady eyes, the coarse moustache, the closed mouth,' and by objectification, 'what he was.' The coal dust emphasises his strangeness and apartness, which she seeks to penetrate, and yet it remains an essential part of his nature. 'His face was masked black with coal dust. She could not see him, she could not know him.' As in the 1910 treatment of Elizabeth's response, the Louisa of 'Two Marriages' remains unchallenged by the miner's 'coarseness', 'it was not repulsive to her because it would wash off.' Yet seeing how 'in its dirt his

12. 'Daughters of the Vicar'; The Prussian Officer, p.85

face had a kind of nobility' she contradicts herself. 'A kind of nobility' re-echoes the earlier vagueness 'somehow full of native honour' found as soon as Lawrence attempted to identify Alfred's attractiveness. But in the revision, the reader can feel secure that it is Louisa herself who is searching, and that the way to discovery is one which Lawrence has already taken, and now can retrace with confidence. Problems of imaginative perception and of 'sensitive contact' are now dramatised through the portrayal of character, and are not, as such, difficulties misunderstood by the author. The questions of class culture, and the separation between the working and the middle classes, which were nervously handled in The White Peacock, The Trespasser and Sons and Lovers now appear with clarity and sureness. Louisa's initial inability to 'see' Alfred, is a dramatic comment upon her background and upon her family's equal failure to make contact with the working people of Aldecross. She is distinguished from her family by her necessary compulsion to succeed where they have failed.

In Chapter One of this thesis Lawrence's characteristic approach was identified in a number of the successful early poems as a personal search for the meaning of personal experience, as an analysis of private impressions formed by the poet of his surroundings, whose purpose was essentially self-revealing. The same kind of attention to the physical world, as given in the poems, occurs stage by stage during Lawrence's development as a writer of prose fiction, as a creator of characters, many of whom share in this personal, analytical mode of perception. Yet by 1913 to 1914 evident changes in this approach had occurred. In 'Daughters of the Vicar' Louisa is intent not merely upon self-discovery, but on

becoming aware of Alfred, of the unique individual that he is:

'She (Louisa) had only seen one human being in her life - and that was Mary. All the rest were strangers. Now her soul was going to open, she was going to see another.'¹³ Such awareness does not necessarily mean knowledge of the other person's emotions, but of him or herself as a separate, personal being: 'a person, an intimate being he was to her.' The knowledge is attended in her case by a sense of mystery and of discovery that is both self-revealing and also a challenge to the self:

Curious how it hurt her to take part in their fixed routine of life! Louisa felt the almost repulsive intimacy being forced upon her. It was all so common, so like herding. She lost her own distinctness.

He ducked his face round, looking up at her in what was a very comical way. She had to harden herself.

'How funny he looks with his face upside down,' she thought. After all, there was a difference between her and the common people. The water in which his arms were plunged was quite black, the soap-froth was darkish. She could scarcely conceive him as human. Mechanically, under the influence of habit, he groped in the black water, fished out the soap and flannel, and handed them backwards to Louisa. Then he remained rigid and submissive, his two arms thrust straight in the panchion, supporting the weight of his shoulders. His skin was beautifully white and unblemished, of an opaque solid whiteness. Gradually Louisa saw it: this also was what he was. It fascinated her. Her feeling of separateness passed away: she ceased to draw back from contact with him and his mother. There was this living centre. Her heart ran hot. She had reached some goal in this beautiful, clear, male body. She loved him in a white, impersonal heat. But the sunburnt, reddish neck and ears: they were more personal, more curious. A tenderness rose in her, she loved even his queer ears. A person - an intimate being he was to her. She put down the towel and went upstairs again, troubled in her heart. She had only seen one human being in her life - and that was Mary. All the rest were strangers. Now her soul was going to open, she was going to see another. She felt strange and pregnant.¹⁴

Louisa is 'troubled' yet she has also 'reached some goal.' Her

13. 'Daughters of the Vicar'; The Prussian Officer, pp.86-7.

14. Ibid. pp. 86-7.

initial misgivings in these scenes, however, are as confidently expressed by Lawrence as her eventual reconciliation to it. The 'separateness' she felt belonged to her social unease in the uncouth workman's household, but as this passes away, the mode of perception associated with it is repudiated.

A second evident change, linked to her discovery, is the certainty with which she and Alfred are now seen both as individuals and as exemplars of their respective social class. Differences in kinds of perception reflect differences of class, so that the search for a truthful and clear way of seeing is a social as well as a personal one. In 'Daughters of the Vicar' inhibitions and perceptual distortions are diseases of class as well as personal shortcomings. Personal, perceptual clarity and individual fulfillment now involve transcending the newly identified context of class consciousness, while in earlier prose works attaining a certain class status was enough to secure approval.

In 'The Thorn in the Flesh' a young soldier, Bachman, is made to submit to a discipline of military conduct alien to his personality. At the onset he accepts this enforced subordination in the same way as Alfred defers to the superior status of Louisa:

He had something of military consciousness, as if he believed in the discipline for himself, and found satisfaction in delivering himself to his duty. There was also a trace of youthful swagger and dare-devilry about his mouth and his limber body, but this was in suppression now.

(1913. 'The Thorn in the Flesh')¹⁵

A few days after, old Mr. Durant died. Miss Louisa saw Alfred once more, but he was stiff before her now, treating her not like a person, but as if she were some sort of will in command

15. 'The Thorn in the Flesh', The Prussian Officer, p. 31.

and he a separate, distinct will waiting in front of her. She had never felt such utter steel-plate separation from any one. It puzzled her and frightened her. What had become of him? And she hated the military discipline - she was antagonistic to it. Now he was not himself. He was the will which obeys set over against the will which commands. She hesitated over accepting this. He had put himself out of her range. He had ranked himself inferior, subordinate to her. And that was how he would get away from her, that was how he would avoid all connexion with her: by fronting her impersonally from the opposite camp, by taking up the abstract position of an inferior.

16

(1913, 'Daughters of the Vicar'.)

... How was she to approach him? For he would take not one step towards her. He would only put himself entirely and impersonally at her service, glad to serve her, but keeping himself quite removed from her.

('Daughters of the Vicar').

... As he sat in the hall of the vicarage... He felt abashed and humbled by the big house, he felt again as if he were one of the rank and file. When Miss Mary spoke to him, he almost saluted. 'An honest man,' thought Mary. And the patronage was applied as salve to her own sickness. She had station, so she could patronize: it was almost all that was left to her. But she could not have lived without having a certain position. She could never have trusted herself outside a definite place, nor respected herself except as a woman of superior class.¹⁷

Both Alfred and Louisa must transcend their class differences and the fixed order imposed on them by their social status. Such order would be crippling to their eventual achievement of a satisfactory relationship, for it denies, as Mary denies, a response to the human and individual in the other person whereby the whole range of feeling, imaginative and sensual, is apparent. Although Louisa is the first to experience this new clarity of perception, which culminates in the washing scene, it is incumbent upon Alfred to do likewise. The last two of the three passages describing his reaction to Louisa's

16. 'Daughters of the Vicar', The Prussian Officer, p. 65.

17. Ibid. pp. 88-90.

superior status occur after this scene, during which her social awkwardness has temporarily disappeared, revealing Alfred to her. Yet he in the above passages cannot 'see' her for the same reason as she, previously, could not 'see' him. And for the same reasons, Mary cannot respond to him other than as her inferior. The social values which hastened Mary's acceptance of Mr. Massy are destructive to the perceptual ones required for personal fulfilment. Mary's way of seeing is not essentially different from that which Alfred must transcend within himself. For before his reconciliation with Louisa he too identifies himself in superior/inferior terms not based upon the new definition of morality and immorality revealed by the story, but on those dictated to him by his class background, his servile position in society. The scene of mutual recognition between himself and Louisa is withheld until, after some moments of extreme suspense befitting the importance of what is now at stake, Alfred can 'see' and acknowledge her:

He was leaning forward on the arms of his chair. He turned to her. Her face was pale and set. It looked heavy and impassive, her hair shone richer as she grew white. She was to him something steady and immovable and eternal presented to him. His heart was hot in an anguish of suspense. Sharp twitches of fear and pain were in his limbs. He turned his whole body away from her. The silence was unendurable. He could not bear her to sit there any more... His face worked, he hung forward a little, suspended, staring straight into her eyes, in torment, in an agony of chaos, unable to collect himself. And as if turned to stone, she looked back into his eyes. Their souls were exposed bare for a few moments. It was agony. They could not bear it. He dropped his head, whilst his body jerked with little sharp twitchings.

She turned away for her coat. Her soul had gone dead in her. Her hands trembled, but she could not feel any more. She drew on her coat... The moment had come for her to go...

'Don't you want me?' she said helplessly.

A spasm of torture crossed his eyes, which held her fixed... He put his hand tentatively, uncertainly, on her arm...

Then, gradually, as he held her gripped, and his brain reeled round, and he felt himself falling, falling from himself, and

whilst she, yielded up, swooned to a kind of death of herself, a moment of utter darkness came over him, and they began to wake up again as if from a long sleep. He was himself.¹⁸

In this passage a third change distinguishing Lawrence's presentation and style of 1913 from that of his earlier works, comes to light. The physical initiative in this encounter is taken by Alfred, and predominant attention is given to its physiological effects on each of the lovers. These are preceded by hints, also given in bodily terms, of Alfred's state of suspension. 'His heart was hot with anguish... Sharp twitches of fear and pain were in his limbs... his heart... hot and stifled in his breast... His body jerked with little sharp twitchings.' Louisa too suffers in the same way. 'Something was carrying her... Then suddenly a sharp pang, like lightning, seared her from head to foot... and she was beyond herself... speaking out of a fiery anguish, as if the words were spoken from her without her intervention.' Their surrender to each other is revealed as the physical quality of their response gradually overwhelms the narrative: '... a moment of utter darkness came over him, and they began to wake up...as if from a long sleep.'

The closest approach to this so far had been the experience of Paul and Clara in Sons and Lovers:

To know the tremendous living flood which carried them always... the tremendous heave that lifted every grass-blade its little height, and every tree, and living thing, then why fret about themselves? ¹⁹

The last phrase in this extract betrays the interrogative tone through which their experiences are recorded. Paul is shown during

18. 'Daughters of the Vicar', The Prussian Officer, pp. 95-97.

19. Sons and Lovers, pp. 430-431.

a consummate moment with Clara appreciating the 'wonderful stillness of each thing in itself' which 'seemed the highest point of bliss'. His experience amounts to a worship of involuntary forces rather than an actualisation of them. A crow, Paul tells Miriam: 'is religious when it sails across the sky...because it feels itself carried to where it is going.' Alfred too envies 'some collier', for his: 'spontaneity and this blind stupidity which went to its own satisfaction direct.' Yet Alfred is neither that collier, nor does he have within him, as Paul does, a strain of the educated middle classes. The affair with Clara can be explained, indeed was explained by Lawrence indirectly, as a premeditated cure for the over-analytical forms of thinking Paul wished to escape from, while that between Alfred and Louisa contains at its source no such motive, nor does it take place against a background dominated by analytical thinking. In watching the other collier Alfred shows traits of an inquisitive sensibility, yet this is no longer an attribute of over-riding importance. Equal to it is the sense of intimate connexion Alfred experiences among his surroundings:

The cage came down, a dozen men lined on. Durant noticed tufts of snow on the perforated, arched roof of the chain, and he was pleased. He wondered how it liked its excursion underground. But already it was getting soppy with black water.

He liked things about him. There was a little smile on his face. But underlying it was the curious consciousness he felt in himself...

Durant walked glad with life among the miners, who were all talking animatedly because of the snow. He liked their company, he liked the white dusky world. It gave him a little thrill to stop at the garden gate and see the light of home down below, shining on the silent blue snow.²⁰

Alfred is receptive to the mysterious influence of the outer world:

20. 'Daughters of the Vicar'; The Prussian Officer, pp. 82-83.

'the wonderful stillness of each thing in itself', in the way that Paul only claims to have been. He likes being with the other miners because they too are receptive: 'talking animatedly because of the snow.' This 'curious consciousness' may have belonged to Walter Morel and his friends, whom Paul, his mother reminds him, will not go and speak to, only talk about. It may have belonged to Walter Bates, who we are told liked a good fire, even though his wife's version of this liking appeared differently: 'If your father comes he'll carry on and say there never is a fire when a man comes home sweating from the pit. A public-house is always warm enough.'²¹ But any mention of this quality of feeling in either Morel or Bates is small in comparison with the image we are given of them by characters whose attitude towards them is continually reductive. In 'Daughters of the Vicar' Lawrence's sympathy had widened to include the thinking process of characters who are not excessively analytical or conventionally moralistic, and this change occurs simultaneously in his prose with a concentration upon physical reactions and physiological states of being. Since too, mental reactions no longer form the entire basis of the style and the presentation of character, their thematic treatment ceases to be accompanied by moral imprecision or qualitative misgivings on the part of the novelist.

Response, perception, analysis, spiritual values, as Dr. Leavis has correctly claimed, belong in 'Daughters of the Vicar' to those characters whose attraction to each other might only with some inaccuracy be called 'physical.'

21. 'Odour of Chrysanthemums'; The Prussian Officer, p. 209.

Louisa sums up the attraction that Alfred has for her in the appraisal of him as a 'fine jet of life'. The ordinary suggestion of 'physical' has in that phrase an enlargement in which, though we don't lose touch with the word, it is seen to be clearly inadequate, and misleading in its inadequacy. In fact, what, contemplating both the attraction and the complementary repugnance, we need to invoke is 'body' as Lawrence opposes it to 'mental consciousness' in the passage written many years later in A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover:

'The body's life is the life of sensations and emotions. The body feels real hunger, real thirst, real joy in the sun or the snow, real pleasure in the smell of roses or the look of a lilac bush; real anger, real sorrow, real love, real tenderness, real warmth, real passion, real hate, real grief. All the emotions belong to the body, and are only recognised by the ²²mind.'

The passage quoted by Leavis is curiously similar to one Lawrence omitted, or developed beyond recognition, during the revision of 'Two Marriages', in that scene where Mary and Mr. Massy visit Alfred's dying father:

The young woman turned away, bitterly ashamed to intrude. Mr. Massy stood blinking. Mary knew he did not understand, neither the awfulness of death nor the bitterness of grief, nor the keen pain of love. He was too small to contain the greater emotions. She felt a flash of hate towards him.²³

The closeness of this to Lawrence's idea of the spiritual importance of the body, expressed in 1929, marks the existence, even in 1911, of a strong predilection. Whether Lawrence had been aware of it then, cannot be answered, but in the later version the fullness of the treatment given to the two couples and their respective relationships undoubtedly shows that distinct certainties had emerged. These, and the dramatic opposition between the two kinds of response represented by the two couples thus achieved denotes the fourth change defining the tale as a mature one.

22. F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence: Novelist, (1964), p. 81.

23. 'Two Marriages', 1911.

'The body' as Lawrence defines it, has a central role to play in the act of perception, no less a role than that of the 'decided positive' referred to in Etruscan Places and distinguished there from the 'negative' of a kodak lens. Mr. Massy is incapable of the physical response the miners feel towards the snowy world at the end of their shift, or Louisa feels when Mr. Durant is dying. In him no 'decided positive' seems to operate, only 'pure lucidity'.

Lawrence describes Mr. Massy partly as a narrative fact:

'There arrived a small, chetif man, scarcely larger than a boy of twelve,' and partly through the reactions he evinces in the characters: 'It seemed to Miss Louisa he scarcely distinguished one person from another.' Enlarged and extended, the dual portrayal continues throughout the story establishing his type of response as a given truth while defining other characters by their responses to him. His is as follows:

He had not normal powers of perception... His body was almost unthinkable... in intellect he was something definite... The conversation at once took a balanced, abstract tone when he participated... In normal human relationship he was not there... always apart in a cold rarified little world of his own. He was unremittingly shy, but perfect in his sense of duty. Nothing that he realised he could do for anyone did he leave undone. Mr. Massy prayed that all might conform to the higher will... He was almost unaware of the conditions about him... He was kind and almost anxiously considerate. But when he considered he was right, his will was just blindly male, like a cold machine. 24

A spiritual 'onlooker' as he might seem, Mr. Massy's response to life lacks any inquisitive, interrogative aspect. He appears not only incapable of self-discovery, but is overtly unquestioning: to him the Christian tenets were 'axioms' and he is unwilling in his

24. 'Daughters of the Vicar', The Prussian Officer, pp. 59-75.

insentience to make any serious or new act of attention. His moral certainties, not subject to mood or change, are indestructable. In addition, he also fails as a participant, being, the opposite of Alfred in this sphere: 'almost unaware of the conditions around him ... always apart in a rarified little world of his own.' In combining an inquisitive with a 'physical' awareness, Louisa is his entire opposite, and her reaction to him shows how completely he represents something alien to her way of feeling:

When she saw him from behind, thin and bent-shouldered, looking like a sickly lad of thirteen she disliked him exceedingly, and felt a desire to put him out of existence. And yet a deeper justice in Mary made Louisa humble before her sister... Miss Louisa was afraid of him. And she was bound, during the course of the prayer, to have a little reverence for him... He was never going to touch her. She was glad her blood would rise and exterminate the little man if he came too near to her, no matter how her judgement was paralysed by him... 'I would just flip him out of the room.' She felt she must protect herself and Alfred from him. Nevertheless, perhaps she ought to feel that Mary, on her plane, was a higher being than herself. But then Mary was Mary and she was Louisa and that also was unalterable.²⁵

In the light of this extract, Louisa obviously did not find it easy to secure and maintain her own judgements. Her impressions of Mr. Massy are clear enough to her, but she has difficulty in building them up to a definite conclusion. The weight of family opinion works against her judgement, and Mr. Massy himself 'paralysed' it. As Leavis has rightly said, hers is definitively a 'spiritual' struggle, and it is of that sort which her own family, her own sister, and Mr. Massy are deficient in. In no previous work by Lawrence, all of them dealing inconclusively with perception, had there been so dramatic a contrast between its creative and reductive aspects. Whereas in Sons and Lovers the two were confused, here

25. 'Daughters of the Vicar', The Prussian Officer, pp. 59-75.

they are separated out. In Louisa's personality, the separating, balancing force works at its highest momentum, and her responses likewise are the most complete and searching. In her mind, each of the other characters get their definition by their perceptual allegiance. Pondering her family's values, weighing her bodily feelings of revulsion against these, selecting certain visual impressions, of Mr. Massy, then of Alfred, and arranging them to form her own judgement, Louisa's response can be described as truly imaginative: contemplative, yet also physically alert:

That evening she talked to Mary of the visit (to the dying Mr Durant) Her heart, her veins were possessed by the thought of Alfred Durant as he held his mother in his arms; then the break in his voice, as she remembered it again and again, was like a flame through her; and she wanted to see his face more distinctly in her mind... Underneath was the deeper dread, almost hatred, of the inhuman being of Mr Massy.²⁶

Here, the familiar process of impressions considered and reconsidered, the transference of observed details, of felt contact, into the mind's eye, as a prelude to eventual judgement and decision, is clearly apparent. Mary, however, exemplifies a kind of response opposed to that of Louisa:

Seeing his acts (of kindness) Miss Mary must respect and honour him. To this she had to force herself, shuddering and yet desirous... Her physical self was prouder and stronger than he, her physical self disliked and despised him. But she was in the grip of his moral, mental being... She shut herself up against the agonies of shame and violation... She would not feel and she would not feel... She had got rid of her body... She had bought her position in the world... She knew, vaguely she was murdering herself... If she had let herself, she would have hated him... sometimes she felt she must rise and bring about death, lift her hand for utter denial of everything, by a general destruction.²⁷

26. The Prussian Officer, p. 64.

27. Ibid. pp. 61-9.

Up to a point Mary's reactions to Mr. Massy are identical to Louisa's. Both are physically repelled, both are aware of his 'moral' strength. Both turn to thoughts of destruction: 'she (Louisa) was glad that her blood would rise and exterminate the little man... She (Mary) felt she must rise and bring about death.' The difference is that Louisa has recognised her reactions, and valued her physical ones highest, whereas Mary has not. Phrases such as 'she had to force herself... she shut herself up against... She would not feel and she would not feel... she had got rid of... if she had let herself... she knew, vaguely,' indicate that in Mary's case, the degree of self-deception, is the predominant one. Potentially imaginative by nature, she has failed to act on the impressions received by her 'physical self' so that the 'decided positive' of that self is obscured, temporarily at least, by other qualifications, those of class, those of money and those of moral idealism. Like Beatrice in The Changeling Mary has come to resemble the very thing which she loathed. By deceiving herself, she has inherited family characteristics which Louisa overcomes. Their father: 'dare not acknowledge... his conscious hatred of... his flock.' He develops an: 'unconscious hatred of himself.' Rather than give vent to feelings of thwarted class superiority and hatred of her husband, his wife becomes an invalid, hiding away in the parsonage and from herself. This suppression renders Mary, her mother and father, tragically immune to the dictates of feeling, upon which imaginative response, if it is to be thoroughly self-revealing, must depend. This state of mind, where imaginative response works on unrecognised and feared, under a surface of apparent calm, was to occupy Lawrence greatly in his analysis of

character, class, and beyond class, of civilisation, in his major novels. To note this briefly at this point one might compare Mary's emotional state after her marriage with that of Gerald Crich in

Women in Love:

Once or twice lately, when he was alone in the evening and had nothing to do, he had suddenly stood up in terror, not knowing what he was. And he went to the mirror and looked long and closely at his own face, at his own eyes, seeking for something. He was afraid, in mortal dry fear, but he knew not what of. He looked at his own face. There it was, shapely and healthy and the same as ever, yet somehow, it was not real, it was a mask. He dare not touch it, for fear it should prove to be only a composition mask... His mind was very active. But it was like a bubble floating in the darkness... In a strangely indifferent, sterile way, he was frightened. But he could not react even to the fear. It was as if his centres of feeling were drying up. He remained calm, calculative and healthy, and quite freely deliberate, even whilst he felt, with faint, small but final sterile horror, that his mystic reason was breaking, giving way now, at this crisis.²⁸

One must go deeper than the class questions of 'Daughters of the Vicar' to investigate the sources of Gerald's neurosis, yet it is clear that Gerald denied, as Mary denied, the imaginative potentiality within himself, and pursued a form of existence inadequate to its demands.

It is also true that Lawrence had made great strides between the works preceding Sons and Lovers and those following closely upon it. Mary, Mr. and Mrs. Lindley were the precursors of characters who, by avoiding imaginative perception and substituting given values, in this case derived from class and conventional morality, ruin their lives. At a level where all the detectable changes between 'Daughters of the Vicar' and Lawrence's earlier prose works are conjoined, one finds the role of imaginative percep-

28. Women in Love, p. 261 -2.

tion as one distinguishing the truly moral from the tragically perverse. Their 'morality' resembles that 'immorality' identified by Lawrence in 'Morality and the Novel', and confidently surpassed in 'Daughters of the Vicar', of novelists who rule their perceptions with the mind; 'Daughters of the Vicar' offers a dramatic enactment of its own confident morality. Achieved as it is, it points forward to the conception of a further predicament in the major novels, where the wider terms of the story, taking social class as a context, widen still further to include those of civilisation.

II

'The Prussian Officer'

With the concluding sentence of the previous section, I do not wish to imply that Lawrence developed through his analysis of class to that of civilisation, without asserting that such development was complex. 'Daughters of the Vicar' represents a period in that development when the class problem received a fuller exploration than in earlier works, and when class issues became for the first time confidently treated. It would be inaccurate, however, to say that at this time class attitude was the only theme into which Lawrence's fiction expanded. The terms of this discussion cannot be confined to class if they are to include what Lawrence considered in 1913 to be the best of his stories: 'The Prussian Officer.' In preparation for a study of The Sisters novels, I shall now consider this story as an example of the fifth change that distinguishes the prose fiction at the end of/^{the} Sons and Lovers period, a change which, like

those seen in 'Daughters of the Vicar', can be defined by use of those terms referring to imaginative response as the basis of Lawrence's presentation.

First entitled 'Honour and Arms' this story was written early in June 1913 and first published under that title the following August in The English Review. Of all the stories revised for The Prussian Officer volume, the title story is the least altered from its original version. The story deals with the failure of a relationship. It has four parts, the first beginning midway through the action, as the two protagonists, an army captain and his servant, are depicted separately occupied yet powerfully aware of each other during a military exercise. The subsequent retrospective account traces the action from its onset, during which the formal relationship between the two men declines into one of brutality. The text begins with the description of foothills, forests and mountains, the landscape against which the action takes place. In this respect it is similar to the narrative technique of Sons and Lovers, 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', 'Daughters of the Vicar' and also to that of The Rainbow. While the symmetry of presentation, and the dramatic balance between opposing characters is as confidently conveyed as in the two earlier stories, 'The Prussian Officer' is closer to The Rainbow than to Sons and Lovers in that details of landscape are made to reflect the inner natures of the characters of the story:

On either hand, the valley, wide and shallow, glittered with heat; dark green patches of rye, pale young corn, fallow and meadow and black pine woods spread in a dull, hot diagram under a glistening sky. But right in front the mountains ranged across, pale blue and very still, snow gleaming gently out of the deep atmosphere... The burnished, dark green rye threw off a suffocating heat, the mountains drew gradually nearer and more distinct. While the feet of the soldiers grew hotter,

Sweat ran through their hair under their helmets... He walked on and on in silence, staring at the mountains ahead, that rose sheer out of the land, and stood fold behind fold, half earth, half heaven, the heaven, the barrier with slits of soft snow, in the pale, bluish peaks... And he saw the fine figure of the Captain wheeling on horseback at the farm-house ahead, a handsome figure in pale blue uniform with facings of scarlet, and the metal gleaming on the black helmet and the sword scabbard, and dark streaks of sweat coming on the silky bay horse.²⁹

As gradually the story unfolds, the temptation is there to place the Captain and his orderly, whose presence was like 'a warm flame upon the older man's tense, rigid body' in the same relationship that the hot, young corn of the plain has to the 'pale bluish peaks' above, a colour moreover echoed in the Captain's uniform, and in his eyes 'that were always flashing with cold fire.' Symbolically, the mountains do in fact draw: 'gradually nearer and more distinct', to be seen by the orderly just before losing consciousness for the last time. Isolation, rigidity, remoteness are words we may continually associate with the Captain's personality: 'a Prussian aristocrat, haughty and overbearing', while the 'dull, hot diagram' of fields invite us to consider the 'marching company of men', who are frequently described later suffering the effects of heat: 'a suffocating, hideous smell; they were passing a flock of sheep... The soldiers were steaming with heat, but were lively. He sat still, seeing the blue mountains rising upon the land... The Captain passed into the zone of the company's atmosphere: a hot smell of men, of sweat, of leather.'³⁰ By the end, oriented towards the mountains, the orderly dies from fever induced by his sense of separation from his company, and by the hot sunlight, and the reader

29. The Prussian Officer, pp. 7-8

30. Ibid, pp 9-20.

who has followed his progress from the beginning, and carefully responded to the proper inducements, will not be taken by surprise.

Of 'The Prussian Officer' it cannot be said, as it can of Sons and Lovers, that symbolic factors demand interpretation only in so far as the characters are themselves aware of them, that a landscape or a gesture have less meaning in themselves than that given to them by the protagonists. George Ford who writes with admiration for the story, bases his interpretation on the following statements:

The structure of the first part might be likened to an X. As a result of the relationship, each, in effect, crosses over to become something of the opposite of what he was at the outset, in part to exchange roles... The unconscious man, which he (the officer), had both envied and despised in the character of his servant, and suppressed in his own character, takes violent control of him.

The servant's painful awakening is of a different order for he is aroused not into full consciousness but out of innocence.³¹

Ford's view may be substantiated, also in part, by the highlighted details of the surroundings: the uniform, the heat, the bluish gleam in the eyes of the captain, and the mountains. Yet the process of interpretation, if not taking place through the eyes of the characters, leaves more problems for the reader than he can solve without acknowledging a wide margin of possibilities. As with oracular statement, many interpretations may suit different temperaments. Some readers may wish to delegate the symbolic overtones of landscape and colour in the story to an interpretation based exclusively upon the characters of the protagonists. Another possibility would be to view the story not as two separate analyses of opposing elements, one dealing in landscape and the other in

31. Double Measure, pp. 78-79.

character, but to consider how and to what extent these two may be conjoined. As can be seen from an examination of the third part of the story, in no other work preceding The Rainbow was Lawrence so concerned to analyse the interpenetration of landscape and the mind of a character, inter penetration that is, at a preconscious level.

The moral difficulties presented by imaginative response on the conscious level, are as much apparent in 'The Prussian Officer' as they were in 'Daughters of the Vicar'. As in the latter the difficulties involve characters unwilling to acknowledge feelings unfitted to their conscious moral system of beliefs. To discuss how these difficulties appear in 'The Prussian Officer' it is necessary to give some attention to the contrast and similarity between the orderly and the Captain. A similar theory of human types, expressed in Lawrence's late travel essays, operates in 'The Prussian Officer' to the extent that certain of the remarks made about the Mexican Indians in 1925, are relevant and identifiable in the fictional terms of the story. The theory, however, can take us only so far, for the fictional analysis outstrips it and goes deeper. Up to a point, the theory of onlooker and participant as these terms refer to the Captain and the orderly respectively, is a helpful one. In the Captain's highly civilised, aristocratic temperament, in which physical feelings are monitored and restrained by the mind, can be seen the type of the individual or onlooker. The orderly represents unconscious man, physically 'unhampered', hardly aware of his own personality until made so by the Captain. As one might expect from a story so finely and confidently adjusted, the Captain is attracted to his opposite in the orderly who is a

participant in the same sense as the Indians in their corn dances are participants:

The orderly was a youth of about twenty-two, of medium height, and well built. He had strong, heavy limbs, was swarthy, with a soft black, young moustache. There was something altogether warm and young about him. He had firmly marked eye brows over dark, expressionless eyes, that seemed never to have thought, only to have received life direct through his senses, and acted straight from instinct. 32

The Indian, singing, sings without words or vision. Face lifted and sightless, eyes half closed and visionless, mouth open and speechless, the sounds arise in his chest, from the consciousness in the abdomen... There is no individual, isolated experience... The experience is generic, non-individual. It is an experience of the human bloodstream, not of the mind or spirit... There is no spectacle, no spectator. 33

Even though the words: 'direct through the senses... instinct... unconscious', are little more than gestures towards a definition of the orderly's state of mind, the contrast between that and the Captain's is the same as that between the Mexicans and the Western onlookers, who are conditioned by their civilisation to regard experience as individually based, as each man isolated from the mass of his kind.

So intractable is the distinction in the case of the Captain and the orderly that one may again be reminded of the warning tones of the travel essays:

The two ways, the two streams are never to be united. They are not even to be reconciled. The Indian way of consciousness is different from and fatal to our way... Our way... is different from and fatal to the Indian. There is no bridge, no canal of connexion. 34

32. The Prussian Officer, p. 9.

33. Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places, pp. 56-58.

34. Ibid, p. 55.

Only a modification of these two absolutes could, as Lawrence came to discover, avoid a 'fatal' confrontation, but in 'The Prussian Officer' no modification occurs. The two absolutes fight to remain absolute in themselves, and the outcome is a fatal one. The Captain's 'sense of touch', to recall another phrase from the late essays, is lost in his violation of the orderly during the scene of brutal kicking. It is the only way he can find to get 'into touch' with the other man. But he succeeds only in forcing the orderly to share that corrosive self-awareness marked by instances of unwilling imaginative reaction:

At the start, he had determined not to limp. It had made him sick to take the first steps, and during the first mile or so, he had compressed his breath, and the cold drops of sweat had stood on his forehead. But he had walked it off. What were they after all but bruises! He had looked at them, as he was getting up: deep bruises on the backs of his thighs. And since he had made his first step in the morning, he had been conscious of them, till now he had a tight, hot place in his chest, with suppressing the pain, and holding himself in... The captain's hand had trembled at taking his coffee at dawn: his orderly saw it again... The orderly felt he was connected with that figure moving so suddenly on horseback: he followed it like a shadow, mute and inevitable and damned by it. And the officer was always aware of the tramp of the company behind, the march of his orderly among the men.³⁵

Forced to consider its significance, which he can feel but hardly understand, the orderly fights his awareness of pain: 'suppressing' it, 'holding himself in', or trying to walk it off. Yet memory, instrumental in imaginative thinking as the mind returns to scenes of emotional importance, mingles with immediate impressions: 'The Captain's hand had trembled... The orderly felt ... connected with that figure moving so suddenly...' The trembling hand which the

35. The Prussian Officer, pp. 7-8.

orderly recalls to his mind's eye appears later in the story, similarly ominous, so that the reader is invited to remember for himself its impressionable significance. The Captain, now seen with strong emotional and imaginative colouring produces in the orderly a sense of being 'damned'. It is as if the orderly transfers his loathing for a state of mind alien to him to the visible object which produces it. His loathing is a double one and doubly insidious, both to the object he eventually destroys and to himself.

The orderly tries to dismiss the bruises he has received from the Captain, as the Captain had tried, without success, to dismiss from his own mind his obsession with the young man. The effects in both cases were physical - death being the Captain's payment - yet Lawrence is equally interested, as he was in 'Daughters of the Vicar' in the mental attitude of both the orderly and the Captain which could prefer dismissal and suppression to self-recognition. As first seen in the story, both characters are 'linked' even though they are presented as opposites. The officer tries to escape his feeling towards the orderly and the kicking scene represents a temporary loss of self-control. Afterwards:

The officer, left alone, held himself rigid, to prevent himself from thinking. His instinct warned him that he must not think. Deep inside him was the intense gratification of his passion, still working powerfully. Then there was a counter-action, a horrible breaking down of something inside him, a whole agony of reaction. He stood there for an hour motionless, a chaos of sensations, but rigid with a will to keep his consciousness, to prevent his mind grasping. ^{blank} 36

This passage is not 'imaginative' in the sense that a character is

36. The Prussian Officer, p. 15.

remembering moments of attraction or revulsion, enabling the reader to share the ensuing insight into his feelings. Here, the feelings are definitely secret ones: even the character does not want to know about them. The terms describing his reactions are physical or chemical, involving bodily states or transmutations. The conflict in the officer's feelings is created by his rejection of the large imaginative potentiality which is also part of himself. Just as the orderly suffers bruises, the delicate vessels of the inner man are here broken and injured. This state had been prepared for earlier in the story as whenever imaginative response threatens the composure of either character, it is resisted. The physical attraction of the orderly for the Captain happens involuntarily, yet equally important is his effort to resist, or as in 'Daughters of the Vicar' not to 'see.' 'He could not get away from the sense of the youth's person... but kept his face averted, as if to avoid seeing him. To see the soldier's young, brown, shapely peasant's hand grasping the loaf... sent a flash of hate or ^{of} anger through the elder man's blood.' The following sentences, the second of which refers to the incident where the Captain trying to force awareness upon the youth flips a glove in his face, describe what is virtually the same emotion, centred paradoxically in two opposite natures:

He [the Captain] did not choose to be touched into life by his servant.

It was a shock... he felt something sink deeper, deeper into his soul, where nothing had ever gone before... Some of his natural completeness in himself was gone, a little uneasiness took its place.

[And from that time an undiscovered feeling held between the

How different the outcome of the story might have been had the Captain allowed his mind to 'grasp' and the feeling between the two men become one discovered rather than 'undiscovered' is not suggested, and we are given evidence merely of conflict, without resolution. Resistance to self-exploration in 'The Prussian Officer' implies either a strong capacity for it deliberately unused, or an instinctive mistrust of it. If the officer exemplifies the first of these two impulses, the orderly represents the second, yet the results in each case are the same. At the meeting point of the X, to recall Ford's terms, they may be identical, but it is during the subsequent divergence that it becomes less easy to see the characters sustaining this diagrammatic definition. Ford carefully identifies the orderly's state of mind as of one roused 'not to full consciousness but out of innocence' but this distinction is vague where Lawrence's analysis is illuminating.

Early in the second part of the story 'The Captain sat on horseback, watching. He needed to see his orderly... The Captain was firmer and prouder with life, he (the orderly) himself was empty as a shadow.' This return of the Captain to a degree of composure while the orderly suffers would seem to support Ford's view of the exchange of states of mind, but it would seem natural for the Captain to feel secure at a distance. And later in the second part the orderly's reactions become inconsistent, even contradictory, as Lawrence analyses his responses to the outer world, an analysis moreover which comes to occupy fully half of the text.

37. The Prussian Officer, pp. 9, 10.

During the manoeuvres in the burning sun the orderly: 'felt as in a blackish dream; as if all/^{the} other things were there and had form, but he himself was only a consciousness, a gap that could think and perceive.' Later, 'sometimes it was dark before his eyes, as if he saw this world through a smoked glass, frail shadows and unreal.' The inconsistency is one between the outer world having 'form', solidity, and its being 'frail shadows and unreal'. The orderly is not shown to be aware of the inconsistency or to try to understand it, and after killing the Captain he returns to a modified form of his earlier, innocent state of mind. The inconsistencies continue as impressions are received unmonitored 'direct through the senses', though the senses ~~now~~ are distorted by fever and anguish. At a still later point, seeing a woman in a field: 'she was the bright, solid unreality. She would make a noise of words that would confuse him, and her eyes would look at him without seeing him.' Any suggestion gathered here that the orderly alone could think and perceive, could both 'look' and 'see' would nevertheless be difficult to sustain. Falling from his horse, earlier, he had half-slept, but on opening his eyes had not been able to focus or comprehend objects and sounds:

He came to with a start. His mouth was dry and hard, his heart beat heavily, but he had not the energy to get up. His heart beat heavily. Where was he? - the barracks - at home? There was something knocking. And, making an effort, he looked round - trees, and litter of greenery, and reddish, bright, still pieces of sunshine on the floor. He did not believe he was himself, he did not believe what he saw. Something was knocking. He made a struggle towards consciousness, but relapsed. Then he struggled again. And gradually his surroundings fell into relationship with himself. He knew, and a great pang of fear went through his heart. Somebody was knocking. He could see the

the heavy, black rags of a fir tree overhead. Then everything went black. Yet he did not believe he had closed his eyes. He had not. Out of the blackness sight slowly emerged again. And someone was knocking. Quickly, he saw the blood-disfigured face of his Captain, which he hated. And he held himself still with horror. Yet, deep inside him, he knew that it was so, the Captain should be dead. But the physical delirium got hold of him. Someone was knocking. He lay perfectly still, as if dead, with fear. And he went unconscious.³⁸

If the orderly does develop perceptual clarity as he wanders through the landscape, it is of a complex sort. The above passage describes a rare case of perceptual experience as the character must here make an effort of attention not to his emotional reactions to the scene - it could be said of this passage that he did not know he was afraid, - but to the simple task of knowing where he is, and what, in the simplest sense he can see and hear. He does not know why he is afraid, nor is he conscious that the knocking may be his own heartbeats. The repeated 'someone was knocking' suggests the recurrent attempt to understand the sound, and the reader is thus encouraged to share this frenetic consciousness. Memories of the Captain are confused with present images, as if that someone might be the Captain, but the hallucinations are not self-induced, or purposeful, or self-analytical. They belong rather to the strong flow, like blood beating, of submerged feelings, which prevent clarity.

Waking again the orderly realises the knocking to be that of birds tapping at bark. At this point Lawrence establishes a correspondence between these outer details and the orderly's mental state, subsumed as it is, under delirium:

38. The Prussian Officer, pp. 25-26.

He lay down again exhausted, and his consciousness lapsed. He had a horror of the little creeping birds. All his blood seemed to be darting and creeping in his head. And yet he could not move.³⁹

The correspondence is taken up again as more details seen in the outer world, this time of a squirrel, and of the continuous sheet-lightning at night, appear in his semi-consciousness feverishly transformed:

And the mere delirium of sickness and fever went on inside him - his brain opening and shutting like the night - then sometimes convulsions of terror from something with great eyes that stared round a tree - then the long agony of the march, and the sun decomposing his blood - then the pang of hate for the Captain, followed by a pang of tenderness and ease. But everything was distorted, born of an ache and resolving into an ache.⁴⁰

Interspersed with these moments of straining and ebbing consciousness are three brief images of the mountains, radiant and remote, as they were at the onset, seen now through the eyes of a character, yet inviting the same degree of interpretation from the reader as formerly. They seem now doubly charged, meaning being given to us by the established associations, of blueness, paleness and remoteness, as well as through the character's responses:

Behind the soft, grey ridge of the nearest range the further mountains stood golden and pale grey, the snow all radiant like pure, soft gold. So still, gleaming in the sky, fashioned pure out of the ore of the sky, they shone in their silence. He stood and looked at them, his face illuminated. And like the golden, lustrous gleaming of the snow he felt his own thirst bright in him. He stood and gazed, leaning against a tree. And then everything slid sway into space.

There, straight in front of him, blue and cool and tender, the mountains ranged across the pale edge of the morning sky. He wanted them - he wanted them alone - he wanted to leave himself

39. The Prussian Officer, p. 26.

40. Ibid, p. 28.

and be identified with them... He stood still, mad with suffering, his hands crisping and clutching. Then he was twisting in a paroxysm on the grass.

Then again, his consciousness reasserted itself. He roused on to his elbow and stared at the gleaming mountains. There they ranked, all still and wonderful between earth and heaven. He stared till his eyes went black, and the mountains, as they stood in their beauty, so clean and cool, seemed to have it, that which was lost in him.⁴¹

Glistening in sunset, in the first passage, the orderly's face and the mountain peaks are illuminated by the same powerful radiance, yet the passage reads as if the bluish hills were transmitting to himself something of their remote, peaceful atmosphere. We observe this interconnection without knowing whether the orderly knew of it. That he came near to identifying with the mountains is only suggested by the second and third passages, and by the fact that the image of the mountains gains predominance as the story ends. In the second, he stands 'mad with suffering' at not being able to 'leave himself and be identified with them'. By the third passage he has approached the point of realising that the mountains are symbols 'for that which was lost in him', and at that point his apprehension of their significance may coincide with the reader's more closely than it had previously done. But by far the bulk of this gradual approaching realisation in the orderly had occurred on a subliminal level, where his mind functioned without understanding.

Readers of 'The Prussian Officer' stand therefore in a different relationship to the work from those of Lawrence's prose up to and including Sons and Lovers. One might with some justification say that in 'The Prussian Officer' Lawrence relies more

41. The Prussian Officer, pp. 28-29.

upon his own interpretation of events and surroundings than upon that of his characters: upon the reader's therefore, rather than upon the protagonists' own assessments of scene and detail. That Lawrence had a previous tendency to do this can be seen in The Trespasser but to be successful in so doing required many complementary changes to be effected, bringing with them a subtlety and mastery he only acquired after Sons and Lovers. The interpenetration of the outer world with the orderly's state of mind at a preconscious level requires the reader to understand where the character cannot, to share his perception and remain concurrently superior to it. The reader himself therefore is required to be both participant and onlooker at once. Interpretation on the part of the reader and the characters is made necessary by the story's structure and style. Neither the officer nor the orderly realises in what ways the landscape is meaningful, the correspondence between the characters and their surroundings being transmitted to the reader, who is alone given access to what they are not consciously aware of. The orderly tries, because of his derangement, to make sense of the seen world. It appears to him as patches of light and colour and shape, hardly coherent, except in terms of that derangement, which we can perceive and understand. When this change in presentation and style is carried through to The Rainbow we find analysis of character now takes into account that preconscious level of response first apparent in 'The Prussian Officer', a level from which imaginative thinking can be seen to develop by stages, and to emerge as the germinal structure upon the given foundations.

I

Introduction.

Our universe is not much more than a mannerism with us now. If we break through, we shall find, that man is not man, as he seems to be, nor woman woman... And then starts the one glorious activity of man: the getting himself into a new relationship with a new heaven and a new earth... And then they will behold, to their astonishment, that the sun is absolutely different from the thing they now see, and that they call 'sun'.

1

'The Crown' was written between March and September 1915 at the same time as Lawrence was making his final revisions of Twilight in Italy, and one year after beginning his 'Study of Thomas Hardy'. 'The Sisters' was begun in March 1913 and after December 1914 was rewritten to become eventually the two novels The Rainbow and Women in Love. In the essays, Lawrence began to explore abstract conceptions of the processes underlying human experience in the modern world. Why he did so, and what the effects were on his fiction after 1914 are some of the issues I wish to discuss in this final chapter. The sentences quoted above from the conclusion to 'The Crown' maintain an interest not merely in relationships between individuals, but in the relatedness of the individual to the outer world, in a way of seeing, which has been in large part the subject of the previous chapters. The increase in abstraction was itself a phenomenon which we must now take into account, but it is as well to note in these introductory remarks, that the conflict surrounding imaginative response and its analy-

1. 'The Crown' Phoenix II, (1968), p. 415.

tical function had not lapsed but gained in intensity. A brief passage from the letters written in the early years of the war shows how far Lawrence was even prepared to reject some of his own most familiar techniques of thought.

We must not look back. There must be no looking back. There must be no more retrospection, which is introspection, no more remembering and interpreting. We must look forward into the unknown.²

The conflict between 'retrospection', or 'introspection' and the 'desire to look into the unknown' is already familiar from The Rainbow and Women in Love. While The Rainbow in so far as it deals with the past, not simply of individuals but of English civilisation, is the most retrospective of all Lawrence's novels, Women in Love contains a forward looking principle in which hope for the future might survive even though, in the present, civilisation's effects may seem purely destructive. In the above letter, analysis, self-exploration, interpretation and memory, and with them by implication imaginative response, are revealed as destructive forces. Although central to Lawrence's concerns at this time, he could not discuss or employ such forces without misgivings. By 1915 a definition of self-consciousness appears, damaging in such characters as Hermione and Gudrun, yet still that force which moved the Brangwens of The Rainbow beyond their changeless origins. It was no longer a concept operating merely within the personal life of the author, but was relevant now to the conditions of civilisation he inherited, and the past and future of that civilisation. Like

2. Selected Letters. p. 92.

Louisa and Alfred Dur ant in 'Daughters of the Vicar' Birkin and Ursula survive because they are able to escape those conditions. Yet a problem for the reader of Women in Love is how far the conditions have been reordered beforehand by the novelist or transformed beyondrecognisable reality.

In the 'Foreword' to Women in Love Lawrence makes sure that readers of the new novel should expect little realism:

(Women in Love) is a novel which took its final shape in the midst of the period of war, though it does not concern the war itself. I should wish the time to remain unfixed, so that the bitterness of the war may be taken for granted in the characters.

Man struggles with his unborn needs and fulfilment... Any man of real individuality tries to know and to understand what is happening, even in himself, as he goes along. This struggle for verbal consciousness should not be left out in art. It is a very great part of life. It is not superimposition of a theory. It is the passionate struggle into conscious being... Every natural crisis in emotion or passion or understanding comes from this pulsing, frictional to-and-fro, which works up to culmination.³

If the time remains unfixed, obviously it is a different kind of novel from Sons and Lovers for example, that Lawrence is introducing, and if we are to accept the bitterness without the war, that would be to accept the emotion without knowing the circumstances contributing directly to that emotion. Even in civilian life, as Lawrence was only too aware, such circumstances did exist and did cause him bitterness, but for Women in Love Lawrence substituted a different set of circumstances to support the emotion from those under which the emotion grew and was realised. The war as such is never mentioned, while the destructive mechanisms of industry are ~~mentioned~~

³. 'Foreword to Women in Love' Phoenix II, pp. 275-6.

revealed in such a way as to suggest a complete crystallisation of warlike mentality in a civilian setting. This may seem at first an admirable development, but it means that the results of a long and complex personal analysis are to be presented with insufficient weight. The analysis is to exclude at least half of the circumstances relevant to its conclusions, namely, those of the war, and while this may not damage the presentation in the work of a different kind of novelist, it is clear that Lawrence's had most usually been successful where the largest part of his process of conceptualisation could be seen working integrally and developing. No concept or abstraction had occurred previously in either his poetry or prose unless it were the result of that 'passionate struggle into conscious being' shown to originate in personal response, subjective impressions gathering to form symbols, and experiences reappraised through sensitive contact. Not only in Women in Love are we not shown the entire, or even a very large part of the author's struggle, though we may surmise it, but the characters also seem able to reach conclusions and form judgements without our being shown why. It may not be thought necessary to know what Birkin's personal corruption consists of, and only that he associated it with the West African statuette. In the same way we need not know what Lawrence's experience of the war was, only that he associated it with machine technology, but what we are not given in Women in Love is the entire and developing process in which these associations would form necessary points in the 'struggle into conscious being'. To explain them the reader must either look outside the text or establish an attitude towards the text that

would render such problems integral to the particular kind of novel Women in Love is.

The only danger may be that without the usual fullness of presentation, without the ability to grow and develop beyond the fixed though complex limits Lawrence imposes upon them, his characters will lose their autonomy, or the illusion of autonomy which the reader must maintain if he is to appreciate their 'passionate struggle into conscious being'. In Women in Love the motives and actions of the characters often appear to have been decided regardless of their consent. They act out their fate, as George Ford has argued, in a 'dance of opposites.'⁴ Both passages from the 'Foreword' taken together highlight the reader's problem in Women in Love as one which was also a major problem for the novelist, and one to some extent dramatised within the novel itself.

Many critics have been tempted to turn to Lawrence's contemporary writings for clarification of the view of civilisation presented in Women in Love; this temptation is understandable as Lawrence argues out his position in a variety of different texts. In this final chapter I shall trace the gradual loss of dependence upon imaginative response as a means of presenting character, through The Rainbow and Women in Love, and the simultaneous increase in its function as an abstract concept. Even though much of The Rainbow is concerned with response to described experience, it may be that in Women in Love many of the conclusions about civilisation expressed by Birkin are not founded upon experiences given to us at first hand, and that when Lawrence's full presenta-

4. Ford, Double Measure, pp. 208-209.

tion is no longer made available to us, critical attention to the non-fictional works, the essays and letters, without of necessity, be increased.

II

The meaning of the opening paragraph of The Rainbow does not rest with the abstract words that express it: 'interrelations... exchange...interchange', but in the sustained, even flow of the prose. In the lives of the early Brangwens and their connexion to the land, birth and death, winter and harvest are in the same way not events perceived in isolation, but seasonal experiences, recurrent or cyclical. And just as no single event transcends this horizontal movement, so no isolated word stands apart to carry the weight of the whole. In the following sentences, the abstractions of the second passage: 'warmth...generating...pain...death' for example, are muted by their rhythmical concurrence with the substantives of the first: 'pulse...blood...teats...cows', which are decisively not abstract:

The young corn waved and was silken, and the lustre slid along the limbs of the men who saw it. They took the udder of the cows, the cows yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men.

So much warmth and generating and pain and death did they know in their blood, earth and sky and beast and green plants, so much exchange and interchange they had with these, that they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed, their faces always turned to the heat of the blood, staring into the sun, dazed with looking towards the source of generation, unable to

turn round.⁵

In these sentences, equal stress is given to concrete and abstract nouns, so that together distinctions are erased. 'Warmth... generating...pain...death', also resembles: 'earth...sky...beast... green plants', or earlier: 'cattle...earth...vegetation...sky'. The prose style impresses upon the reader the state of mind being described, by mixing together objective and subjective statements. In the abstractions one finds the objective statement, the author's opinion or response. By intermingling these with concrete nouns he makes available to us the character's point of view, the subjective statement. The result is that although both kinds of statement are present the dominant one is in this case subjective and the reader is allowed almost as little consciousness of abstraction as the men who are being described.

They are participants in the life of nature. Their connexion with it is not exploratory or imaginative but stable and unconscious, in the same way as the orderly's receptivity to his surroundings during delirium was unconscious in 'The Prussian Officer'. But another style, apparent in the earlier stories and in Sons and Lovers is used to portray the state of mind of the Brangwen women, and this unmistakeably is that formerly associated with imaginative response:

Her house faced out from the farm-buildings and fields, looked out to the road and the village with church and Hall and the world beyond... Looking out, as she must, from the front of her house towards the activity of man in the world at large, whilst her husband looked out to the back at sky and harvest and beast and land, she strained her eyes to see what man had done in fighting outwards to knowledge...

5. The Rainbow, pp. 8-9.

At home, even so near as Cossethay, was the vicar who spoke the other, magic language, and had the other, finer bearing, both of which she could perceive, but could never attain to. The vicar moved in worlds beyond where her own menfolk existed. Did she not know her own menfolk: fresh, slow, full-built men... She knew her husband. But in the vicar's nature was that which passed beyond her knowledge. As Brangwen had power over the cattle so the vicar had power over her husband. What was it in the vicar, that raised him above the common man as man is raised above the beast? She craved to know. She craved to achieve this higher being, if not in herself, then in her children. That which makes a man strong even if he be little and frail in body, just as any man is little and frail beside a bull, and yet stronger than the bull, what was it? It was not money nor power nor position. What power had the vicar over Tom Brangwen - none. Yet strip them and set them on a desert island, and the vicar was the master. His soul was the master of the other man's... And why -why? She decided it was a question of knowledge.⁶

The women aspire to forms of life less easy to localise, and we are invited therefore, not merely by the concluding sentence of this passage, to associate the aspiration with knowledge and that knowledge with a higher form of abstraction. Echoing earlier sentences: 'road...village...church...hall', move onwards to: 'the world beyond', and the rhythms extend further, in a sentence not included in the quotation, to: 'far-off world of cities...governments...the active scope of man...the magic land'. Knowledge is a concept the women themselves are shown to be capable of forming, and they achieve this by a process of thought which is by now familiar. The change of subject from men to women brings about a subtle modification in style. After the indicative statement: 'The women were different', the narrative returns to its former preoccupation. Yet gradually, beginning with the sentence: 'At home, even so near as Cossethay...', the narrative recedes and

6. The Rainbow, pp. 9-10.

the woman's thoughts supersede what was previously an account of the men and women's different response, the men looking back to the natural world of farm-buildings and fields, the women to the road and village, the emblems of civilisation. The woman's response is then given to us as if we had direct access to her thinking. It is the vicar who concentrates her attention, not in actuality, but in her imagination. Not merely the focus, he is also the representative to her of that form of thought in practice at this point in the text. In him, exploration, questioning, self-revelation are to be found, for her aspiration is fulfilled by the act of enquiry. That it is thought, subjective statement, and not narrative alone, can be gathered from the repeated emphasis upon 'The vicar...' at the onset of each sentence. 'The vicar moved...whereas the vicar... But the vicar's nature...so the vicar... What was it in the vicar... She craved to know'. The vicar's 'nature' interests her, a phenomenon she explores through images of man and beast. She conceives of the progress towards utterance as: 'a battle...waged on the edge of the unknown', while the men turn back to: 'sky... harvest...beast...land', a concreteness no longer dominant but modulated, the content of these slow, rhythmical sentences gaining in abstraction, as the woman appropriates them. Finally her thoughts, in comparing the vicar's 'nature' with Brangwen's, create images in her mind's eye, removed now from what is merely immediate as she concludes: 'set them on a desert island and the vicar was the master'. Her decision is reached through a series of comparisons and imaginative transformations given to us at the point of their occurrence.

In the opening paragraphs of The Rainbow Lawrence uses two varieties of style. The one which he developed during his revisions of the Prussian Officer tales is used to convey unconscious feeling, unresolved experience, the other from an earlier period of his life, being the kind based upon imaginative exploration. The second is less likely to represent in The Rainbow the author's own act of enquiry than his mastery of that mode, his appreciation of its relevance for a novel whose theme was to be the evolution of civilisation. Aspects of imaginative response which had earlier created confusion in his writings were never before presented with such confidence. The women for example regard the squire of the Hall and his wife and friends as characters from myth: 'Penelope and Ulysses... Circe and the swine and the endless web'. Their fantasy is described as 'a poem' but no anxiety is evident as it would have been even in Sons and Lovers where imaginative formations of experience result in literary fantasy. The Brangwen women, although indeed progressive, are limited. They are not aware, as Lawrence himself was long before 1914, of the actual nature of the battle 'raging on the edge of the unknown'. They were 'fortunate' for in the people of the Hall: 'the wonder of the beyond was visible' to them. And their aspirations, unlike those of later heroines in The Rainbow and Women in Love did not extend so far as to exceed all mere symbols of the fulfilled life such yearning could create.

III

In the first three chapters of The Rainbow so much is revealed about the characters, the intimate drama of their lives, that further explanation by the critic need confine itself only to consider not what was, but why it was so. Of Lydia's attractions for Tom Brangwen and the resolving qualities of their marriage we may feel thoroughly assured, yet why they were so, why they happened to take this form and not others remains a question which must be attempted if we are to understand later relationships in this novel and Women in Love. Why was it for instance: 'a profound satisfaction that she was a foreigner'? Should this question lead us back to Lawrence's own marriage, and if so where behind that? Is The Rainbow, like Sons and Lovers, an autobiographical novel? If not, what are the differences? Yet whether or not The Rainbow is autobiographical need not trouble us too far if the question of Lydia's foreignness can be answered by reference to the terms already given within the novel, and in those terms the authorial statement about Tom's reaction has indeed clearly been prepared for by earlier scenes.

First of all Tom had been fascinated by a foreigner whom he had met in connexion with a girl: 'a handsome girl with a bosom, and dark hair'. And the foreigner inhabits the: 'finer, more vivid circle of life', which Tom's female ancestors had worshipped in the vicar and Mrs. Hardy of Shelly Hall. The Brangwen women had looked to the wider world for completion, finding Lord William, the squire and his lady at one frontier of their lives, yet a frontier

not fixed and finite but opening into: 'the beyond...before them'. The opposite frontier, stable but limited were the Brangwen men. Tom Brangwen is the first individual character whose attempt to harmonise his everyday life with that of his imagination is described to us in full. His response to women during his early years is, like Paul Morel's, an imaginative one: 'The woman was the symbol for that further life which comprised religion and love and morality'. Later it becomes sexual, but this in itself brings him no satisfaction. Significant events in his development, however, are not presented merely through narrative description, but by our being made acquainted with his personal struggle, his imaginative interpretation of experience. His response to the prostitute: 'it had been so nothing, so dribbling and functional', we feel to be his own, not merely the author's commentary and distinct from the straight narrative record: 'The disillusion of his first carnal contact with woman, strengthened by his innate desire to find in a woman the embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses, put a bit in his mouth'. This is helpful but we would not be so fully informed that Tom is a character partially aware of his feelings, unsatisfied, yet capable of harmonising his sensual and inquisitive drives, without the subjective statements frequently given. About the girl and the foreigner we hear:

Of the two experiences, perhaps the meeting with the foreigner was the more significant. But the girl - he had not settled about the girl.

He did not know. He had to leave it there, as it was. He could not sum up his experiences.⁷

7. The Rainbow, p. 25.

Interpretation of these two experiences is therefore Tom's problem as well as the reader's or the novelist's. The word 'perhaps' shows that the novelist wishes us to understand it largely as Tom's and that the urgency of enquiry produces in Tom a dreamlike state separating him from his normal forms of living and feeling. The meeting with the foreigner releases into Tom's life a numinous power, and while this lasts the actual events of the meeting are transformed into dream images:

The result of these encounters was, that he dreamed day and night, absorbedly, of a voluptuous woman and of the meeting with a small, withered foreigner of ancient breeding. No sooner was his mind free, no sooner had he left his own companions, than he began to imagine an intimacy with fine-textured, subtle-mannered people such as the foreigner at Matlock, and amidst this subtle intimacy was always the satisfaction of a voluptuous woman.⁸

Foreignness and sexuality are associated, if not in this encounter harmonised, but the fact that the reader is here able to think of them as abstractions, even though they obviously proceed from the presented experiences, would cause the question of why these abstractions, why this pattern and not another. One refrains from asking why because the pattern of strangeness and familiarity has been gradually emerging since the novel's opening scenes. But what this actually means in terms of the reading experience is that one looks backward and beyond the immediately presented episodes - in this case the meeting with the foreigner - in trying to interpret them. One looks beyond Tom's own consciousness, and his act of attention, back towards that of his ancestors.

8. The Rainbow. p. 25.

The presentation of Tom's relationship with Lydia gave Lawrence the opportunity for a fuller analysis than is afforded by the largely narrative details surrounding the foreigner and the girl. Tom's response to Lydia's foreignness undergoes several changes. When they meet, Tom imagines that they have 'exchanged recognition', and this is before he discovers that she is Polish. This is enough to place it as a matter of instinct, merely something in her nature or bearing attracts him. Although her foreignness is at first: 'a profound satisfaction' to him, he later begins to fear it. After his proposal:

They were such strangers, they must for ever be such strangers, that his passion was a clanging torment to him. Such intimacy of embrace, and such utter foreignness of contact! It was unbearable. He could not bear to be near her, and know the utter foreignness between them, know how entirely they were strangers to each other. He went out into the wind. Big holes were blown into the sky, the moonlight blew about. Sometimes a high moon, liquid-brilliant, scudded across a hollow space and took cover under electric, brown-iridescent cloud-edges. Then there was a blot of cloud, and shadow. Then somewhere in the night a radiance again, like a vapour. And all the sky was teeming and tearing along, a vast disorder of flying shapes and darkness and ragged fumes of light and a great brown circling halo, then the terror of a moon running liquid-brilliant into the open for a moment, hurting the eyes before she plunged under cover of cloud again.⁹

Facing the humbling vastness of the night sky while Tom thinks of the strangeness, the incalculable distance between him and the woman he has just asked to be his wife, establishes a connexion in our minds between Lydia's foreignness and natural forces. It appears that the scene during which these forces acted has come to an end with a revelation of them. The next chapter, where Lydia

9. The Rainbow, p. 49.

is in labour, also ends with a culminative moment of expansion:

The swift, unseen threshing of the night upon him silenced him and he was overcome. He turned away indoors, humbly. There was the infinite world, eternal, unchanging, as well as the world of life.¹⁰

The third chapter, where their relationship is permanently resolved and becomes stable, suggests finally this connexion between a wide, vast landscape, and emotional and religious fulfilment, and transforms the original response of fear to one of liberty, exploration, acceptance:

Their feet trod strange ground of knowledge, their footsteps were lit up with discovery. Wherever they walked, it was well, the world re-echoed round them in discovery... The new world was discovered, it remained only to be explored.

They had passed through the doorway into the further space, where movement was so big, that it contained bonds and constraints and labours, and still was complete liberty. She was the doorway to him, he to her. At last they had thrown open the doors, each to the other, and had stood in the doorways facing each other, whilst the light flooded out from behind on to each of their faces, it was the transfiguration, the glorification, the admission.¹¹

What kind of landscape is this 'strange ground' on which they tread? Like the two doorways and the transfiguring gleam of light, it is metaphorical, where previously the chaotic skies, the threatening vastness had been actual, visualised. If we are meant to see the landscape and sky as reflections of their inner lives, transformed from threat and chaos to stability, we cannot but see that Tom and Lydia have themselves become symbolic figures in this last passage. Realism, actuality, direct reference to events

10. The Rainbow, p. 81.

11. Ibid. pp. 95-96.

sensuously perceived, are likewise discarded in favour of symbolic language, yet when asking what the symbols mean in terms of the development of their relationship or in terms of their family history, we find that Tom has discovered in Lydia the satisfaction of all his inherited 'inarticulate, powerful religious impulses' which are not now separable from his sensual feelings. The word 'beyond' could not be used without echoing its usage in the opening scenes, connected as it is there with imaginative exploration, yet in the conclusion to Chapter Three of the novel the style associated with imaginative response is discarded. If the imaginative process is present at all it is now referred to symbolically. Earlier: 'beyond' was linked with other words: 'outwardness...supreme... knowledge...travelling', which we also find in the conclusion: 'If he could...be lit with her in one consummation, that were supreme, supreme... (They entered) the further space... the strange ground of knowledge... he was travelling in her through the beyond'. In words linked by the same emotional resonance we are invited to believe that Tom and Lydia are indeed living: 'the supreme life on earth', revealed to his ancestors. The danger is that as readers hearing the verbal counterpart of the ideas, we may lose our sense of what the ideas mean, even though there has been a good deal of imaginative enquiry on Tom and Lydia's part throughout their relationship.

In the scene preceding this conclusion, Tom had visited his brother's mistress:

She took him into the drawing-room, full of books, with a piano and a violin-stand. And they talked, she simply and easily.

She was full of dignity. The room was of a kind Brangwen had never known; the atmosphere seemed open and spacious, like a mountain-top to him.

'Does my brother like reading?' he asked.

'Some things. He has been reading Herbert Spencer. And we read Browning sometimes'...

He looked at her with lit-up eyes when she said 'We read'... She was about forty, straight, rather hard, a curious, separate creature...there was something chilling about her. But he was filled with boundless admiration...

But when he got to the Marsh, he realised how fixed everything was, how the other form of life was beyond him... He felt a prisoner, sitting safe and easy and unadventurous...

But then, he said he did not want it. The excitement of the visit began to pass off. The next day he was himself, and if he thought of the other woman, there was something about her and her place that he did not like, something cold, something alien, as if she were not a woman, but an inhuman being who used up human life for cold, unliving purposes.¹²

Tom is only partially interested in the civilised form of life occupied by Mrs. Forbes. In this sense he progresses beyond the point which, by a similar act of attention, his ancestors had reached. Yet the words associated with fulfilment: 'space, beyond, travelling', describe their experience as they also describe his. He is even tempted to see Mrs. Forbes's room as: 'open and spacious...a mountain-top', but true openness, freedom and distance are ultimately reserved for his experience with Lydia. The discovery, the creative belief in the future, is different for Tom than for his ancestors, for in his case it involves sexual fulfilment, from which we conclude that although the forms the experience take may not be identical, the experience is essentially the same, since the words associated with one are used to describe the other.

It is necessary, however, to examine the style of language in the conclusion more closely. Mrs. Forbes, Tom finally decides, is

12. The Rainbow, pp. 90-91.

an: 'inhuman being who used up human life for cold, unliving purposes', reminding us of Mr. Massy in 'Daughters of the Vicar', whose 'inhuman being' contrasted with the fuller sensitivity of Alfred and Louisa. Like Alfred, Tom learns to relax, to abandon and therefore discover his true self. The style in which the experience is described is, however, different in The Rainbow. We are not given Tom Brangwen's thought process, nor his physical reactions beyond the sentence: 'His blood beat up in waves of desire' which is hardly more than formal phrasing and Lawrence leaves it at that. What we are given is a tableau of symbolic images not shown to arise from any mind but the author's, and among them, a drift towards abstraction:

Their coming together now, after two years of married life, was much more wonderful to them than it had been before. It was the entry into another circle of existence, it was the baptism to another life, it was the complete confirmation.¹³

Where symbols predominate, as in the imagery of doorways and light quoted earlier, the reader feels that the presence of the author's mind may guide him towards the meaning, and welcomes the appeal to his visual and auditory sense. Where impressions formed in the characters' minds are given, he may respond to motives revealed, decisions made, with even more assurance. But where abstractions are used to convey meaning or dramatic significance the connexion between reader and author, reader and character, even between author and character, grows tenuous. The reader is left with no support for his opinions from the text. A comparison of the

13. The Rainbow, p. 95.

following extract with the one above reveals the first as more abstract than the second and comparatively less rich in meaning:

The days went on as before, Brangwen went out to his work, his wife nursed her child and attended in some measure to the farm. They did not think of each other - why should they? Only when she touched him, he knew her instantly, that she was with him, near him, that she was the gateway and the way out, that she was beyond, and that he was travelling in her through the beyond. Whither? -What does it matter? He responded always. When she called, he answered, when he asked, her response came at once, or at length.¹⁴

In this second extract, the images of a gateway, the suggestions of actual visible contact between the couple, and the interrogative tone, seem to spring from their own reaction to the experience, and offer the reader three planes of reality to draw upon - what the characters think, what they do, and the intimate relatedness of these to the greater imagery of an evolving culture through and beyond the characters, and realised, if not in their own consciousness, then through the pattern of successive generations.

Such imagery is not, if removed from its textual context, obviously linked with cultural advancement. A gateway, a way into a separate space, 'beyond', does not come into the novel with a special meaning, even a cultural meaning. It acquires this in the opening of the novel where it is first used with cultural associations, and these it never loses. The first passage also contains meanings that might be considered cultural or social, namely the words 'baptism' and 'confirmation'. These words might also be taken to be images, not abstractions, and they indeed are abstract nouns only in one sense. In a concrete sense they refer to

14. The Rainbow, p. 96.

Christian liturgy. In a marital context the use might be figurative, giving a deeper religious significance to the relationship than that formally extended by the word 'matrimony' as solemnised in a church. But in the second passage the reader has it explained to him how Tom and Lydia actually behave towards each other, as a result of their experience. In the first passage we are told that it is the religious quality of the experience that marks it as a point of initiation. In the second we know how the practice of it was carried out, how, moreover, Lydia did not always respond to Tom immediately, but 'at length', and what they felt, what questions they asked of themselves, 'Whither? What does it matter?' in their stability. The reader therefore feels that although a formal, wider-ranging imagery is present, it is as newly revealed to him as to the characters, in their sense of freedom, their ability to wonder, ask, risk, yet feel ultimately secure in the relationship they have achieved.

IV

The Rainbow and the Rainbow Symbol

At certain times in The Rainbow the location, the background, or outer world is given special attention, at others it serves as minor narrative detail or even disappears from the story. In the previous section it was suggested that a symbolic landscape appears in The Rainbow, a 'strange ground' trod by the initiated, as well of course as an actual one. Yet certain surroundings share both

qualities. Although actual they appear to us to be in the process of acquiring special meaning given to them by characters under emotional stress. The accumulation of symbolic meaning around landscapes or objects is, as has been shown, found frequently in Lawrence's work, and I wish to examine in this section some of the important developments of this phenomenon in The Rainbow.

It has been described how earlier the idea of a 'strange ground' supported a special imagery, vocabulary and language, which the reader learns to associate with the particular religious experience Lawrence is trying to define. The act of associating certain motifs, impressions, images in the text therefore becomes fundamental in the act of reading. It is now the reader who must allow impressions to build up in his mind and so become symbols as the novel develops. In The Rainbow words such as: 'the beyond... space...gateway', demand that the reader give an imaginative interpretation of the experience described in the text, by storing up the impressions which these words, in their context, have acquired.

Certain passages in The Rainbow will be interpreted differently by readers whose sensitivity to recurrent words and images is high, and such readers are likely to claim that their form of sensitivity is the one the novelist intended them to develop. The view that recurrence is significant and was intended to be so is borne out by Lawrence's frequent emphasis on memory and memorability in his rendering of character and experience: 'certain phrases, certain moments coming each time like a red-hot brand down on her soul (till) ... at last she came to herself'. In asking what the certain moments are in The Rainbow a point made in the previous

section becomes relevant. Tom and Lydia share an experience which has developed into its present form over a long period, longer than a lifetime and covering the several generations of Tom's ancestors. While Tom is not, and could never be aware, of the earlier form the experience had taken, the reader of course, is, and this is a disjunction which, although inevitable and not necessarily a weakness, was not found so pervasively in Lawrence's work before. While listening to the characters' thoughts, as they occur, the reader can hear a sort of cosmic interference. During the time the character, in this case Tom, is preoccupied with the immediacy of the experience with Lydia, readers are conscious of the wider landscape stretching from past to future in which this intimacy marks a moment of guiding significance.

It is not totally with a concern to present the girl Anna's attitude to the couple that Lawrence chooses the image of the rainbow: 'She was no longer called upon to uphold with her childish might the broken end of the arch. Her father and her mother now met to the span of the heavens, and she, the child, was free to play in the space beneath, between.' Anna's actual thoughts are not given, while the pattern, or tableau, in which she takes part, predominates instead. Her experience then, is not recorded while it enters her conscious mind, but in images which will recur with gathering force. The most striking example of this is the rainbow itself. Tom and Lydia's rainbow denotes a moment of significant stability and continuation. The rainbow is, to them, both a stopping point, a transformed moment of time, and an opening outwards, a gateway. Through it, the future, future hope and possi-

bility, is perceived. These two aspects, united in Tom and Lydia, are divided in Anna and Will Brangwen, as Will's Cathedral arch fails to satisfy Anna's demand for change, or spiritual expansion. Yet Lawrence does not state this only by choosing an appropriate image. In Lincoln Cathedral, which she and Will visit together, the arch is not only symbolic but actual as well. It gains symbolic status partly through its association with a rainbow arch, and partly through the contrasting reactions its stone presence invokes. Will's response to the Cathedral is unsatisfactory to Anna because he sees it too readily as a stopping place, a total summary of life. She on the other hand regards it as a place through which one must pass in exploration. An imaginative response was always appropriate when anxiety and stress prevailed upon stability, and in this central scene of the novel, two forces, of aspiration and of stability, are bodied forth in a dramatic confrontation. Anna's analytical reactions are in part a response to the, here, disharmonious relationship of these two forces, and in part proof of her allegiance to aspiration. The imaginative process, as her mind works on the problem, is the only essential mode of thinking she can adopt if she is to turn hope into fulfilment.

The conflict surrounding imaginative response is now dramatised with the more complete awareness Lawrence had acquired. But in The Rainbow it is seen from an entirely new standpoint. It is not, now, so much the ability to form impressions that is characterised as the quality of response to symbols. That so much of Will's personality remains out of sight, yet active, is consistent with his worship of the Cathedral, for he worships the symbol, as

he also admires the lamb in Cossethay church, before he even attempts to understand what the symbol stands for and how it originated. Anna's response to the Cathedral shows her interest in how symbols come about, how much of life they might exclude, and the false stability they may assert. The symbol to Anna is something in the process of being formed: 'her soul was carried forward to the altar...but ever she hung back in transit... So that she caught at little things, which saved her from being swept forward headlong.' But it may become unsatisfactory once it is formed. 'However much there is inside here, there's a good deal they haven't got in', the little faces mocked.' Anna responds, therefore, to those details which will restore the balance upset by Will's too ready acceptance of this limited symbol. The result of the scene is that as she steers close to exercising that highly analytical consciousness without which no symbol would be validated, the reader is led to hope that the union of stability and aspiration achieved by Tom and Lydia will be found once more by Anna. In addition one feels the delicacy of the issues raised. What symbol will a novelist himself so conscious of the essential flaws and necessary contradictions in symbols create for us?

Material not transformed or transformable into symbol, or left out of symbols other people have accepted, is often referred to throughout The Rainbow as 'dead matter'. 'The altar was barren, its lights gone out. God burned no more in that bush. It was dead matter lying there.' Anna's judgement anticipates that of Ursula when faced with other possible heavens for the spirit. Her reaction to Nottingham College is one which shows how high her

demands are as well as her hopes:

College was barren, cheap, a temple converted to the most vulgar, petty commerce. Had she not gone to hear the echo of learning pulsing back to the source of the mystery? -The source of mystery! ...Always the shining doorway was a gate into another ugly yard...another sordid valley full of amorphous, squalid activity.¹⁵

Ursula does not know that she has inherited a quest for fulfilment pursued by her ancestors, but we may recognise this at once in the aspiration contained in the word 'temple' and in the familiar, dominant images: 'Always the shining doorway was a gate'. Added to this are now those words associated with inadequate symbols, quasi-inductions into the 'beyond...the unknown', words like 'ugly ...sordid...amorphous...squalid.' Were the need to discover an adequate symbol not so acute and intransigent for Ursula, her view of the college, and earlier of the weekday world as distinct from the Sunday world, and the 'amorphous' colliery at Wiggiston, would have been less damning, but the hope remains as well as the disappointment, and this is true of each of her encounters with a possible symbol. As a girl her hopes are seasonally aroused by the Christian festivals only to be let down: 'The girl had come to the point where she held that that which one cannot experience in daily life is not true for oneself... The vision should translate itself into weekly terms.' Her 'Christ' first appears as Skrebensky, and her requirement that she should find a place for herself in this weekday world, is eventually met by her attendance at Brinsley Street School. Her motives for becoming a teacher are linked therefore

15. The Rainbow, p. 436.

with the process through which unco-ordinated experience can become meaningful or symbolic.

After his conflict in the cathedral with Anna, Will is forced to regard the cathedrals as: 'a sort of side show, whereas before they had been as a world to him within a chaos: a reality, an order, an absolute, within a meaningless confusion.' Ursula also wishes to find a place of focus, a centre by which chaos may be clarified, but she is at first only able to experience time and place as inconsequential, though she continues to hope for something transcendent. In Brinsley Street and at Wiggiston she responds to the surroundings as if they were the creation of a society in which such hope was dead, and other values, material values, had taken over. There is therefore a taste of accusation in her response, as well as self-mistrust, though in Brinsley Street the latter is more dominant. There, two kinds of values, hers and the society's, are contrasted in the portrait of Mr. Brunt. 'The man was become a mechanism working on and on... But the personal man was in subdued friction all the time. She must become the same - put away the personal self, become an instrument.'

In Wiggiston this personal self with which Ursula responds, and which is the imaginative or receptive part of her personality, is the 'side show',¹⁶ while the main stage is occupied by the colliery. On both occasions Ursula notices the hardness, the sharpness and angular ugliness, the machinelike organisation of the objects which represent the system that exists, but she can find nothing to repre-

16. 'Side show' is also used in the cathedral episode, and having a similar meaning. See The Rainbow, p. 205.

sent the system she has been chosen to serve by her ancestry, one in which each person attends to his or her own inner promptings, so that the physical self is properly harnessed in the act of enquiry, and not suppressed to a state of 'subdued friction'. Such reverence for individual autonomy, for the 'decided positive' of subjective reactions, and for the physical self, will find its truest expression in imaginative enquiry, if we take that to mean what it means in the case of Louisa and Alfred Durant, not that of Gertrude Morel.

A lack of such reverence would lead to a denial of imagination, and in the case of Ursula's Uncle Tom, this is exactly what happens:

He did not care any more, neither about his body nor about his soul. Only he would preserve intact his own life. Only the simple, superficial fact of living persisted. He was still healthy. He lived. Therefore he would fill each moment. That had always been his creed. It was not instinctive easiness: it was the inevitable outcome of his nature. When he was in the absolute privacy of his own life, he did as he pleased, unscrupulous, without any ulterior thought. He believed neither in good nor evil. Each moment was like a separate little island, isolated from time, and blank, unconditioned by time... The rigidity of the blank streets, the homogeneous amorphous sterility of the whole (of Wiggiston) suggested death rather than life. There was no meeting place, no centre, no artery, no organic formation... The place was a moment of chaos perpetuated, persisting, chaos fixed and rigid¹⁷

The 'fact of living' has become to Tom a kind of 'side show' and with it all those feelings to which attention should be paid. Yet these are not acknowledged by the character, who acts 'unscrupulously' in private, and isolates each moment from memory. The image such a character presents to the social world he inhabits is one which conceals the disintegration within himself. Wiggiston lacks a centre or meeting place. It is a translation into bricks

17. The Rainbow, pp. 345-346.

and mortar of Uncle Tom's anti-imaginative personality, and he is the antithesis therefore of all that Ursula represents. The men who work for him are also described in terms of imaginative response. In them also the capacity to respond sensitively and according to their inner natures has been suppressed. Like the town they likewise lack a 'centre': 'Like creatures with no more hope, but which still live and have passionate being, within some utterly un-living shell, they passed meaninglessly along... It was as if a hard, horny shell enclosed them all.' The importance of the attitude of Uncle Tom to himself and society cannot be over-estimated in a novel which portrays irresponsibility to the self in two other of the main characters, Winifred Inger, whom Uncle Tom marries, and Anton Skrebensky, whom Ursula finally rejects as her lover.

Ursula's response to experience, to society, and to other individuals takes place, I have suggested, partly as a kind of abstract discussion of the right and wrong forms of response which are possible. Characters are rejected not only for their social values, but also because their capacity for imaginative enquiry is somehow flawed, and these two aspects of character are, moreover, connected. The way in which they are flawed appears to be shown by a lack of respect for the self as the centre and a compromised, perverse worship of symbols, be they cathedral or college or colliery, without exercise of individual physical intelligence.

But mainly these characters lack hope that anything will ever be different. The miners of Wiggiston are 'creatures with no more hope', whereas hope is a quality which Ursula herself never relinquishes. After her experience with the horses just before her

miscarriage, the return to health is a return to hope and to the assertion of her former self. She recognises also a 'vaster power' that will resolve her destiny. 'The man should come from the Infinite and she should hail him'. Like Cyril of The White Peacock whose delight in the London streets and crowds is a mark of his own awakening and adjustment, Ursula's response to the 'colliers, women and children' of Beldover is one which sees them infected with her own hopefulness: 'a waiting in pain for the new liberation'. The actual discovery of a centre, a holy ground, or a 'strange ground' does not, however, take place, but it does persist as a future vision towards which Ursula is travelling: 'Nay, when she looked ahead, into the undiscovered land before her, what was there she could recognise but a fresh glow of light and inscrutable trees going up from the earth like smoke. It was the unknown, the unexplored...upon whose shore she had landed.' Unlike Anna in the cathedral she does not resist this forward motion and accepts its possible culmination, but it is a forward motion and not a resting place. The 'hard, cutting edges' of the houses are still present and Ursula cannot ignore them any more than she could in Wiggiston. Above them nevertheless the final rainbow is established, and though it is both an actual and symbolic rainbow, its intangible qualities contrasted with the hardness of the buildings beneath, it does suggest the pervading hope that changes will occur. Change will come both in the response of the inhabitants, and in the social organisation the towns represent. Such a hope is, like the rainbow image itself, the result of an analysis, throughout the novel, of what ~~alone can~~ stand as a symbol of a

complete response.

In the next section of this chapter I wish to examine whether the aspiration, the belief in such a symbol, can be said to continue in Women in Love.

V

Birkin's Decision to Marry Ursula

Although the nature of response is discussed not only by the author or in monologue form, as in Anna's objection to Will's response to the cathedral, but by the characters in Women in Love, as when Birkin and Hermione discuss the destructive effects of mental analysis in 'Classroom', it is not with this that I wish to begin an examination of Women in Love, but with the process of thought that precedes Birkin's decision to propose to Ursula. This passage occurs mid way through the novel and bears many similarities as well as contrasts to imaginative thinking as found in Lawrence's earlier fictional works.

Birkin has returned from the South of France after a period of convalescence and, we assume, meditation of the problem he now faces. Ursula finds him hurling stones at the moon's reflection in a pond. They begin talking about their relationship, still in its early stages, and reach some slight measure of agreement in which: 'He wanted only gentle communion, no other, no passion now. So that soon she drew away, put on her hat and went home.'

The next day, however, he felt wistful and yearning. He thought he had been wrong, perhaps. Perhaps he had been wrong to go to

her with an idea of what he wanted. Was it really only an idea, or was it the interpretation of a profound yearning? If the latter, how was it he was always talking about sensual fulfilment? The two did not agree very well.

Suddenly he found himself face to face with a situation. It was as simple as this: fatally simple. On the one hand, he knew he did not want a further sensual experience - something deeper, darker, than ordinary life could give. He remembered the African fetishes he had seen at Halliday's so often. There came back to him one, a statuette about two feet high, a tall, slim, elegant figure from West Africa, in dark wood, glossy and suave. It was a woman, with hair dressed high, like a melon-shaped dome. He remembered her vividly: she was one of his soul's intimates. Her body was long and elegant, her face was crushed tiny like a beetle's, she had rows of round heavy collars, like a column of quoits, on her neck. He remembered her: her astonishing cultured elegance, her diminished, beetle face, the astounding long elegant body, on short, ugly legs, with such protuberant buttocks, so weighty and unexpected below her slim long loins. She knew what he himself did not know. She had thousands of years of purely sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge behind her. It must have been thousands of years since her race had died, mystically: that is, since the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind had broken, leaving the experience all in one sort, mystically sensual. Thousands of years ago, that which was imminent in himself must have taken place in these Africans: the goodness, the holiness, the desire for creation and productive happiness must have lapsed, leaving the single impulse for knowledge in one sort, mindless progressive knowledge through the senses, knowledge arrested and ending in the senses, mystic knowledge in disintegration and dissolution, knowledge such as the beetles have, which live purely within the world of corruption and cold dissolution. This was why her face looked like a beetle's: this was why the Egyptians worshipped the ball-rolling scarab: because of the principle of knowledge in dissolution and corruption.

There is a long way we can travel, after the death-break: after that point when the soul in intense suffering breaks, breaks away from its organic hold like a leaf that falls. We fall from the connexion with life and hope, we lapse from pure integral being, from creation and liberty, and we fall into the long, long African process of purely sensual understanding, knowledge in the mystery of dissolution....¹⁸

'The soul in intense suffering' lets go its 'organic hold' and 'falls from the connexion with life and hope'. This process appears the same as that which had overtaken the miners of Wiggiston in The

18. Women in Love, pp. 285-286.

Rainbow, who, like Ursula's Uncle Tom, had abandoned the effort to understand their experience imaginatively or make connexions between one moment and another in the hope of finding symbols or reaching conclusions that would restore life its meaning. If we understand the imaginative process as one in which feelings are raised to awareness, to within the grasp of the 'outspoken mind', then clearly, 'the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind' is of considerable importance and it is precisely this which in ancient West African civilisation as expressed through its art, has 'lapsed'. There are, however, certain paradoxes in the situation Birkin is faced with. First, it would seem hardly possible for such a civilisation to be capable of art at all, at least art in the sense that Lawrence's own novels are art. The statuette is described to Gerald by Birkin earlier as conveying: 'a complete truth ... It contains the whole truth about that state, whatever you feel about it'. And art in the form encountered in Lawrence's novels is, by his own definition: 'a struggle for verbal consciousness'. So far they would agree, yet the state the statuette conveys is paradoxically one in which: 'the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind has lapsed'. The carving, as Birkin suggests to Gerald, would seem to be shouldering off any moral attitude one cares to adopt towards it, for moral judgements, together with imaginative analysis even of the most sensitive kind, are not what it is about. It is, if Birkin is right, about the absence of these things. Far from being 'fatally simple', Birkin's situation is a highly complex one. To clarify it a little it appears that he is facing, in the form of the West African statuette, a way of feeling

or a kind of response in which all notions of moral value have been abandoned yet which is still in some way honest and pure and even a part of one's destiny: 'She knew...what he did not know... Thousands of years ago, that which was imminent in himself must have taken place in these Africans... There remained this way, this awful African process to be fulfilled... Was this then all that remained? Was there left now nothing but to break off... Is our day of creative life finished?' Developing from The Rainbow what is given now is not merely the character's response but a response to a response, the discussion here of a non-moral, non-imaginative, premental attitude. Ursula's revulsion against her uncle's response or attitude had been clear to her, and her course of action as a result had been unequivocal, but the debate in Women in Love is whether Birkin ought to accept the non-imaginative, decentralised, purely sensual mode as his real destiny, one it would be perverse to deny, or to continue to strive morally against it, thus preserving the hope upon which Ursula's rainbow had been founded.

In view of the issues now most immediate to Lawrence's attention in Women in Love it would seem unnecessary for him to present the personal experiences in Birkin's life to which these issues are relevant. Although hints about a personal experience can be found in the above passage, it has largely been discarded in favour of a discussion of ideas, a no less urgent comparison between conclusions that have already been drawn. The passage below, from an early draft of the novel does suggest that Birkin, who wrote the following ~~in~~ letter to Halliday, had had direct experience of the kind of sensuality associated with the African statuette:

If we are out on the analytical adventure, we must penetrate the darkest continent. But we might as well know all the time what we are about, and not begin to lie to ourselves...and if we have to push on into the darkest jungle of our own physical sensations, and discover the sensuality in ourselves, we need not pretend we are being simple animals...the adventure of knowledge is not finished for us till we have got back to the very sources, in sensation, as one traces back a river...it is a form of immediate anthropology, we study the origins of man in our own experience.¹⁹

It is of course this 'own experience' which is omitted from Birkin's analysis. The statuette is a representation of something he recognises in himself, and he does not need to evolve a symbol of his own to fit what it, quite adequately, signifies. He is, however, practising a form of 'immediate anthropology' with the actual details of his private experience left out. His memory takes him back not to the experience but to the symbol of it, the conclusion about it which he has already reached. For this reason Birkin's analysis exemplifies a new departure in Lawrence's treatment of imaginative response. Ideas and concepts take the place of directly reported experiences, and this change amounts to something of a sacrifice. We know nothing of Birkin's background, or what happened to him earlier in life, and this fact in itself is sufficient to distinguish him from other imaginative heroes.

We are told that Birkin possesses a private income, but such advantages merely enable him to avoid becoming overwhelmed by his surroundings or by his daily life, a privilege denied to most of the characters for example in Sons and Lovers or 'Daughters of the Vicar.' Details given in the Prologue to Women in Love are omitted from the published text and one of the reasons for this may

19. Miko: Toward Women in Love, (1972), pp.239-40.

have been that a too direct treatment of personal experience should be abandoned in favour of a more abstract discussion of the issues such experiences raised.

In the Introduction to this chapter two passages from the Preface to the novel were quoted as examples of the paradoxical nature of the enterprise Lawrence was engaged in. His intentions had been for the time: 'to remain unfixed so that the bitterness of war may be taken for granted in the characters'. He also repeated the claim that his novels celebrate: 'the passionate struggle into conscious being', that takes place in persons of 'real individuality'. In all his fiction preceding Women in Love the time could not remain unfixed because the 'passionate struggle into conscious being' depended upon time and place being the starting point from which imaginative response proceeded towards decision and subsequent action. In Women in Love many kinds of response are present but these are categorised and allotted to specific characters. Dramatic conflict between the characters becomes a conflict between different ~~kinds of response~~. Once the decision has been made that a certain character exhibits certain characteristics, that decision is never qualified or reversed.

In The White Peacock George and Lettie's failure to respond to each other with sufficient sensitivity resulted in tragedy, but in Women in Love the idea now arises that one's personal destiny is something that cannot be controlled in this way. The 'awful African process' may exist regardless of the individuals who belong to that culture. They cannot avert it either in others or in themselves, and it may be, Birkin thinks, more honest to accept it and

submit to the death process than to resist. To surrender, however, would amount to a denial of one's 'real individuality', that part of one's temperament which is, or might hopefully be, separate from the society or culture to which one belongs, and that part from whence 'the passionate struggle into conscious being' arises. The question Birkin must strive to answer is whether the preservation of individuality and imaginative enquiry is still possible in a culture devoted to its destruction. That he can still do so in a spirit of enquiry may be the only hope he has.

Gerald's belief that men are all instruments in a huge mechanism, and that for individual planets to think of themselves as the centre of the universe would add up to 'silliness' or 'chaos', was a philosophy also devoted to destruction. In the character of Gerald, Lawrence restates his conclusion about the war. If the cultural drift of early Twentieth Century Europe were so strong that no individual could stand against it, this conclusion would mean in Lawrence's view the end of hope, the end of belief in sensitive, imaginative exploration, and the final 'ugly yard' into which Ursula's rainbow could be leading.

Lawrence was able to establish with certainty in 'Daughters of the Vicar' that class and social barriers could present obstacles to imaginative response and to human relationships. These barriers prevent the characters from 'seeing' each other, until by an imaginative effort a new way of seeing was achieved. Our conclusion must be that in revising his stories for the Prussian Officer volume, Lawrence considered such vindication was still possible. But as the passage quoted earlier from Women in Love continues,

in which Birkin faces the question of marriage, continually it is Lawrence's most hopeful character in the novel who is at the point of disbelief:

There remained this way, this awful African process, to be fulfilled. It would be done differently by the white races. The white races, having the Arctic north behind them, the vast abstraction of ice and snow, would fulfil a mystery of ice-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation. Whereas the West Africans, controlled by the burning death-abstraction of the Sahara, had been fulfilled in sun-destruction, the putrescent mystery of sun-rays.

Was this then all that remained? Was there left now nothing but to break off from the happy creative being, was the time up? Is our day of creative life finished? Does there remain to us only the strange, awful afterwards of the knowledge in dissolution, the African knowledge, but different in us, who are blond and blue-eyed from the north?

Birkin thought of Gerald. He was one of these strange white wonderful demons from the north, fulfilled in the destructive frost mystery. And was he fated to pass away in this knowledge, this one process of frost-knowledge, death by perfect cold? Was he a messenger, an omen of the universal dissolution into whiteness and snow?

Birkin was frightened.²⁰

Phrases such as: 'It would be done... (They were) controlled by... fulfilled in... Was there left now nothing... Does there remain to us only... fated... this one process... an omen' all suggest the idea that fate or destiny is something fixed, inescapable, and that all future action will simply cause it to happen. In short, Birkin is considering that civilisation may present an obstacle which cannot be overcome, that a new way of seeing cannot occur.

Civilisation is a different phenomenon, more powerful in its effects, than class was in 'Daughters of the Vicar' and proportionately more difficult to surmount. Those who are engulfed by it will merely act out a pattern they can never change, their 'passionate

20. Women in Love, pp. 286-287.

struggle into conscious being' will be ineffectual, their 'real individuality' will cease to have any meaningful existence. In Women in Love therefore, and particularly in the character of Gerald, Lawrence is on the point of negating the values associated with individuality and the struggle into awareness, and therefore with imaginative response, values which through many permutations and experiments, he had been trying to perfect through all his earlier fiction.

Some peculiarities of structure and characterisation in Women in Love can be accounted for by this change. Character-studies of persons whose fate is a decided thing need only be catalogues in which each listed item contains the same, unchanged ingredient, the same faults always apparent. Such persons will be unable to experience any renewal or transformation and our first impressions of them, if those impressions are correct, will be incontestable and merely repeated by further acquaintance. If we receive our impressions directly from the novelist in whose novels such persons appear we cannot doubt that his records are correct and we have no choice but to adopt his view. Our opinion of Hermione Roddice for example is established by Lawrence in the first chapter of Women in Love: 'She always felt vulnerable, vulnerable, there was always a secret chink in her armour. She did not know herself what it was. It was a lack of robust self... a deficiency of being within her.' Even though she could not be more unlike them in social position, her special deficiency is similar to that of Uncle Tom and the miners of Wiggiston who believe they must alter themselves to fit the pits and the place, rather than alter

the pits and the place to fit themselves.' Hermione is willing to alter herself to fit Birkin and others whom to her represent civilised values. Her attitude and that of the miners is essentially the same in that both are ruled by the ethics of society or civilisation rather than by ones evolved imaginatively from their own individuality. Mistrusting her own self Hermione must enlist support and borrow her opinions from others, and at no point in the novel does she reveal any other side to her character than this. Unable to stand against it, her character merely exemplifies the dissolution that Birkin fears is in fact 'universal', and unchangeable!

The first scene of Women in Love appears contrived to accommodate several purposes. The discussion between the two Brangwen sisters^{is} about marriage and the occasion where their subsequent partners, Gerald and Birkin are introduced to them, and to us, is a wedding. Ursula and Gudrun are onlookers, watching the arrival of the bride and groom from a short distance, while Gerald and Birkin are, if a little awkwardly, participants in the ceremony. Later, it is the two men in whom the real conflicts of the novel are revealed. The two women merely reflect their predominant characteristics.

By carefully introducing his characters in this formal way, Lawrence is again creating a precedent in his fiction, for now it is not, in the opening of Women in Love, so much a concern for issues, for characters, unresolved conflicts, which occupies the centre of Lawrence's attention, but a concern to inform the reader of certain facts. The concern is that an opinion should be put across. What

has been decided is what sort of people Ursula and Gudrun are, and that is a decision never to be revoked. The sort of person Mrs. Morel is for example is a question hardly solved by the end of the novel in which she appears, and the move from her factual introduction to the reader, below, is a slow one:

She was thirty-one years old, and had been married eight years. A rather small woman, of delicate mould but resolute bearing, she shrank a little from the first contact with the Bottoms women. She came down in the July, and in the September expected her third baby.²¹

We are told little more than this until we hear what Mrs. Morel's reactions are. As to the Bottoms women, she forms attitudes easily, but it is the attitudes we hear and not the author's opinion of these attitudes. In Women in Love the change from narrative record to author's opinion is almost imperceptible, and implies that there is in reality no difference between these two kinds of information:

The sisters were women, Ursula twenty-six and Gudrun twenty-five. But both had the remote, virgin look of modern girls, sisters of Artemis rather than of Hebe. Gudrun was very beautiful, passive, soft-skinned, soft-limbed. She wore a dress of dark-blue silky stuff, with ruches of blue and green linen lace in the neck and sleeves; and she had emerald-green stockings. Her look of confidence and diffidence contrasted with Ursula's sensitive expectancy...

The two sisters worked on in silence. Ursula having always that strange brightness of an essential flame that is caught, meshed, contravened. She lived a good deal by herself, to herself, working, passing on from day to day, and always thinking, trying to lay hold on life, to grasp it in her own understanding. Her active living was suspended, but underneath, in the darkness, something was coming to pass. If only she could break through the last integuments! She seemed to try and put her hands out, like an infant in the womb, and she could not,

21. Sons and Lovers, p. 9.

not yet. Still she had a strange prescience, an intimation of something yet to come...

Gudrun, new from her life in Chelsea and Sussex, shrank cruelly from this amorphous ugliness of a small colliery town in the Midlands. Yet forward she went, through the whole sordid gamut of pettiness, the long amorphous, gritty street. She was exposed to every stare, she passed on through a stretch of torment. It was strange that she should have chosen to come back and test the full effect of this shapeless, barren ugliness upon herself. Why had she wanted to submit herself to it, did she still want to submit herself to it, the insufferable torture of these ugly, meaningless people, this defaced countryside? She felt like a beetle toiling in the dust. She was filled with repulsion... 22

Gudrun 'submits' to a response to the colliery town that causes her to be associated with: 'a beetle toiling in the dust', while Ursula's attempt to: 'lay hold on life', is compared to: 'an infant in the womb'. The attractive and repellent qualities of these two images are obvious.

The beetle image may have been present in Gudrun's own consciousness as a representation of her reactions, but her reactions as such are ones she cannot circumvent. They exert a corrupt fascination over her. We are led to believe that the 'strange prescience' that Ursula feels within herself, however, will issue forth as future hope and be associated with renewal and freshness like a newborn 'infant'. All she needs to fulfil this hope moreover is a thorough act of attention, so that by imaginative response wherein life can be grasped: 'in her own understanding', she will: 'break through the last integuments'. Our estimation of the quality of response in these two characters is therefore fixed, and their kinds of response need from then on only to be

exemplified. But Lawrence backs away from the danger of theorising too strictly about his characters by having Gudrun exercise discernment when surveying the crowd at the wedding:

Gudrun watched them closely with objective curiosity. She saw each one as a complete figure, like a character in a book, or a subject in a picture... a finished creation. She loved to recognise their various characteristics, to place them in their true light, give them their own surroundings, settle them for ever as they passed before her along the path to the church. She knew them, they were finished, sealed and stamped and finished with, for her. There was none that had anything unknown, unresolved, until the Criches themselves began to appear. Then her interest was piqued. Here was something not quite so precluded.²³

Gudrun is only being described in a way in which the author of Women in Love could truthfully describe himself, for he too, often saw each character as a complete figure. Hermione, Ursula, and Gudrun herself, have all been portrayed as 'finished creations', in the same fashion as Gudrun perceives the wedding guests. A kind of judgement aimed at 'finishing' what it describes is now operating, where it was not operating for example in Sons and Lovers. A quality of progression or of change is reserved for Ursula, but Gudrun's estimation of the Criches as persons: 'not quite so precluded' is eventually proved to be seriously mistaken, for Gerald stands out as one of the most: 'fated...finished...sealed' characters in the novel.

The fourth sentence in the third passage above marks a deviation from the familiar use of the interrogative structure in what seems to be an example of imaginative enquiry. The sentence begins 'It was strange...' but to whom was it strange? If it was strange

23. Women in Love, p. 15.

to Gudrun the idea expressed in the sentence in no way alters her decision to return to Beldover. If it was strange to the novelist, then in telling the reader he is simply conveying information about himself. Gudrun's choice about where to live is, in either sense, fixed. In 'it was strange', the language of imaginative response, including as it does a cumulative questioning aspect, is not being used to help or show decisions being formed or choices taken, but rather the opposite. The questions, 'Why had she wanted to submit herself... did she still want to submit herself to it...?' are superfluous if Gudrun continues to submit. A slight chance that she may not wish to continue is implied in the words 'did she still...' but the revulsion she feels does not appear to be of the kind that wishes the object of revulsion removed, the kind for example that Louisa felt towards Mr. Massy in 'Daughters of the Vicar'. The conclusion that Gudrun felt: 'like a beetle toiling in the dust', contains no hope, or even desire, that she could be otherwise, and the overall feeling in this passage therefore is that her imaginative explorations, unlike Ursula's, will be unsuccessful because they do not wish to change the state of mind that they explore, and that in Gudrun the wish for renewal has been abandoned.

The image of the beetle is of course a recurrent one in Women in Love. Minette's face resembles that of the African carving in being like a beetle. But the accumulation of meaning around this and other images takes place not in the mind of any single character, although Birkin's is the closest approximation, but in the mind of the novelist and, as the novel unfolds, in the reader's. Why it was that beetles became particularly associated in Lawrence's

mind with corruption is not answerable, however, by reading the novel alone. We may suspect that the beetle image appeared as a result of a long imaginative process that took place over several years and included attention to many complex personal experiences. The effect of not including an entire progression from experience to image in the novel is supported by Lawrence's declared intentions in the Preface, of wishing the time to remain fixed, so that the bitterness of the war and other equally disturbing influences could be 'taken for granted'. The result, detectable even in the slight inclusion of images not evolved through image-thought recorded in the text, is that the reader is aware of an imaginative purpose wider than that confined within any single character, or that the real 'struggle for verbal consciousness' in Women in Love surpasses the individuals in whom, the Preface suggests, it is supposed to occur.

Gudrun's initial response to Gerald in the novel's opening chapter is less her own than that prescribed by the imagery associated with Gerald throughout the novel. Characters with very different attitudes, Gudrun and Birkin, both see Gerald in the same 'arctic' light, and Gudrun's enthralled reaction to Gerald, enthralled by his presence: 'In his clear northern flesh and his fair hair was a glisten like sunshine refracted through crystals of ice', makes her a mere vehicle for Lawrence's own view of the part Gerald must play in the determined conflict. In the scene where Gerald forces his horse to stand by a moving train Gudrun's original response to Gerald is expanded but not altered.²⁴ There also, a

24. Women in Love, pp. 122-125.

lurking sinister cruelty is linked with sexual power and an aura of command in Gerald, all of which she finds fatally attractive. The scene is furthermore a restatement of her own characteristic reactions in that she is enthralled by what she finds morally repulsive, just as she was by the colliery town. When the train has passed: 'through the man in the closed wagon Gudrun could see the whole scene spectacularly, isolated and momentary, like a vision isolated in eternity'. The scene does have a static quality, despite its violence, in the way that it merely reiterates a previous judgement of Gerald and Gudrun, a judgement which they seem incapable of reversing. Birkin's view of Gerald reinforces this static judgement: 'This strange sense of fatality in Gerald, as if he were limited to one form of existence, one knowledge, one activity, a sort of fatal halfness, which to himself seemed wholeness, always overcame Birkin after their moments of passionate approach, and filled him with a sort of contempt, or boredom.' Other comments from the novelist on Gerald's character appear as attempts to define a type of attitude that is 'fatal' in the two senses of this word: being both unalterable, inevitable; and catastrophic, deadly. Gerald's interest in discussions and ideas are not the play of an imaginative mind over experience, but merely: 'skin-deep...never more than a mental amusement.' His social philosophy develops an amoral resonance, in reaction against his father's notion of 'love and self-sacrifice'. But Gerald achieves self-sacrifice of a different kind by denying the self and the right of the self to be the centre of its own universe. This, he asserts, leads merely to the desire for chaos;

It was like being part of a machine. He himself happened to be a controlling, central part, the masses of men were the parts variously controlled. This was merely as it happened. As well get excited because a central hub drives a hundred outer wheels - or because the whole universe wheels round the sun. After all, it would be mere silliness to say that the moon and the earth and Saturn and Jupiter and Venus have just as much right to be the centre of the universe, each of them separately, as the sun. Such an assertion is made merely in the desire of chaos.²⁵

Gerald's denial of the right of the self to respond, to be known, and to be revered, amounts to the same kind of denial of imaginative values shown by Uncle Tom, the miners of Wiggiston, Hermione, and earlier by Mr. Massy and Mary Lindley in 'Daughters of the Vicar', and the Captain in 'The Prussian Officer'. As before, Lawrence reproduces the flawed thinking that leads to ill-advised conclusions and the tragic actions that follow. Gerald differs from the rest, however, in that he somehow realises his mistakes without being able to take corrective action. He cannot escape the fundamental feeling that he is doomed and that his efforts are useless. He may as well submit to his fate, and as such we too understand his 'limitation' to be a fatal one. His attitude seems less the result of a wrong judgement or a wrong choice taken at an important stage of life than something he was born with and cannot disown. It is something ancestral. Gerald's view of his mother's household as: 'a brood of wrong children', cannot be chased away by Birkin, whose attempt to lighten the conversation in 'Man to Man' is rejected by Gerald's claim that it is: 'a curse to be alive'.

25. Women in Love, p. 255.

Lawrence throughout takes great care to ensure that we know just enough of Gerald's background to endorse this condemnation. Half-playfully Birkin earlier described Gerald as 'a born unbeliever' and in the preceding chapter 'Diver' we hear that Gerald once told his brother to look down a gun when they were boys and the brother was shot. The discussion between Gudrun and Ursula that follows this revelation is about whether there truly exists the phenomenon of accident, or whether one is always in some oblique fashion responsible for one's own fate. Ursula adopts the hopeful view that one always is. Gudrun, characteristically rejects this, calling the tragedy the: 'purest form of accident'. At the beginning of the chapter: 'The Industrial Magnate', during which Gerald's full history is unfolded, Gudrun learns of Gerald's urge to dominate and be master: 'That wilful, masterful - he'd mastered one nurse at six months. Kick, and scream, and struggle like a demon.' The destructive forces implied by the word 'demon' prove continually too strong for Gerald's hopeful side to overcome them. If we have defined imaginative response so far as the attempt to guide one's destiny through understanding and through comparisons of various reactions and feelings, as Lawrence in his poem 'End of Another Home Holiday' for example, wished to project the forces acting upon him and so reorientate himself, then it is clear that the character of Gerald arises through uncertainty of belief in such a response. Commenting to Gudrun in 'Water Party', Gerald remarks: 'There's one thing about our family, you know... Once anything goes wrong, it can never be put right again - not with us. I've noticed it all my life - you can't put a thing right, once it has

gone wrong'.²⁶ It was the belief of Lawrence up to this point, and shown in all those of his characters with whom he has sympathised, that when anything had gone wrong or was in danger of going wrong, true imaginative feeling, that is where mental analysis combines with sensitive physical reactions, could set it right.

To return then to Birkin's question: 'Is our day of creative life finished?' it can be seen at once that if Gerald were the only hope, the answer would be yes, it is finished. Fortunately, however, he is not and the fact that Birkin can ask the question at all and can care sufficiently about the answer proves that some belief in imaginative enquiry and in the individual's responsibility for his or her own destiny still persists. Asked another way the question is whether Birkin can entertain any hope of exemption from the fate that threatens to engulf Western civilisation in the same kind of living death that overcame the civilisation of West Africa which the stature represents. To cling to such a hope would be an assertion of individuality against society, to refuse to toe the line, in Birkin's words, when one's whole impulse is: 'to smash up the line'. It is indeed individuality which Birkin, having almost given up the problem, finally acclaims:

Birkin was frightened. He was tired too, when he had reached this length of speculation. Suddenly his strange, strained attention gave way, he could not attend to these mysteries any more. There was another way, the way of freedom. There was the paradisaical entry into pure, single being, the individual soul taking precedence over love and desire for union, stronger than any pangs of emotion, a lovely state of free proud singleness, which accepted the obligation of the permanent connexion with others, and with the other, submits to the yoke and leash of love, but never forfeits its own proud individual singleness,

26. Women in Love, p. 206.

even while it loves and yields.

There was the other way, the remaining way. And he must run to follow it. He thought of Ursula, how sensitive and delicate she really was, her skin so over-fine, as if one skin were wanting. She was really so marvellously gentle and sensitive. Why did he ever forget it? He must go to her at once. He must ask her to marry him. They must marry at once, and so make a definite pledge, enter into a definite communion... He must set out at once and ask her, this moment. There was no moment to spare.²⁷

It is clear that we are meant to sympathise with this way of thought and accept Birkin's conclusion as a valid and necessary one. At worst we can appreciate that Lawrence is trying to express what a happy relationship between a man and woman would be like given the profound difficulties which a character such as Birkin has to surmount. The situation Birkin faces suddenly clarifies at that point where he: 'could not attend', an aspect of him which is repeated when, after the violent quarrel with Ursula in 'Excuse' he again lapses into exhaustion only to awake transformed. For all his exercise of mind and strenuous imaginative efforts, the problem it seems is always solved unconsciously, and whether this is the result of his struggle and analysis one cannot say. In contrast to the position Gerald holds, however, it is possible to see Birkin as having found a way out of the fatalism Gerald disastrously cannot escape from, and which forms the 'impasse' in which he eventually dies. Birkin and Ursula have already begun to take the road south to Italy which Gerald, snow-bound in the cul-de-sac of mountains, fails to find. But instead of the rejuvenation of entire communities which the end of The Rainbow anticipates, Birkin and Ursula

27. Women in Love, p. 287.

are forced to live 'in chinks', the only equivalent for the rainbow arch they can expect to find in the civilisation of Women in Love. The aspiration has therefore been reduced, if not finally annihilated.

It is the abstract idea of its further future embodiment with which Birkin rests: 'If humanity ran into a cul-de-sac, and expended itself, the timeless creative mystery would bring forth some other being, finer, more wonderful, some new, more lovely race, to carry on the embodiment of creation.' Speak, however, as he might, of individuality and separateness from the world, Birkin admits here that Gerald's death and his own escape are linked to the fate of the world. To consider ways in which civilisations, not merely personal experiences, can be compared and revitalised, is very much the kind of imaginative exploration to which Birkin is committed in Women in Love. His thoughts when considering marriage to Ursula are not simply those of a private man. Fulfilment was quickly becoming a matter of which civilisation one belonged to, or chose to reject or accept. It is also clear that advisedly or otherwise, Birkin's decision was to reject the direction along which Northern Europe was travelling, and choose some other direction. In so doing he affirms at least the validity of choice, which Gerald for example has not enough faith to do. Belief in choice - and therefore in the imaginative analysis by which right choices are made - ranks Birkin, not like Gerald, 'fated', but as one to whom 'the passionate struggle into conscious being' is still purposeful and alive.

Women in Love Critics and Readers

I saw a soldier on the pier, with only one leg. He was young and handsome: and strangely self-conscious, and slightly ostentatious: but confused. As yet, he does not realize anything, he is still in the shock. And he is strangely roused by the women, who seem to have a craving for him... So he is roused, like a roused male, yet there is more wistfulness and wonder than passion or desire. I could see him under chloroform having the leg amputated. It was still in his face. But he was brown and strong and handsome.²⁸

I have seen a soldier at the seaside who was maimed. One leg was only a small stump, with the trouser folded back on it. He was a handsome man of about thirty, finely built... He had known his consummation. It seemed he could never desire corruption or reduction again, he had had his satisfaction of death. He was become almost impersonal, a simple abstraction, all his personality loosed and undone. He was now like a babe just born, new to begin life... Yet unloosed, curiously, into the light of death... The women particularly were fascinated... The strange abstraction of horror and death was so perfect in his face... He had not realised yet what all the attention meant, which he received.²⁹

In the words 'corruption' and 'reduction' written in the second passage, we recognise the familiar language of Women in Love. The second passage shows the description at a more advanced stage of perception than the first, which is straight-forward observation. A third stage, at which we might expect the incident to be presented in novel form, or in a short story, with a character observing the maimed soldier and drawing his conclusions, does not, however, exist. At some point: 'reduction' was abstracted from the observed experience and reintroduced into the novel as a concept.

28. Selected Letters March 1915. p. 80.

29. 'The Crown' Phoenix II, pp. 401-2.

There is no doubt from these passages that an imaginative process, by which ideas of 'reduction' were conceived, did take place, and there is also no doubt that this fails to be presented in the novel in which 'reduction' occupies a central place. Without being reported in its inception and development, such an idea cannot but cause difficulties for critics and readers of Women in Love.

There may have been other instances in which Lawrence developed an idea and included the process of development in his novel, but the difficulties presented to readers by many of the scenes in Women in Love do appear to arise because the precise nature of an experience or the motive of an action are omitted. In this final section I wish to clarify remarks made earlier about 'readers' and readers' responses, by examining a representative selection of critical reactions to Women in Love.

It was suggested earlier that when a symbol, for example, the African statuette, or an idea, such as 'reduction' are presented without the personal experiences from which they are derived, the critical interest in Lawrence's contemporary non-fictional works increases. The reception of Women in Love by its critics supports this view. The above passage from 'The Crown' was quoted by Stephen Miko in a recent book tracing the development of the values put forward by Birkin.³⁰ While thoroughly acknowledging the paradoxical nature of Birkin's position in being: 'an intellectual search for a mindless self',³¹ Miko is helpful only in pointing

30. See Ch. VI. Fn. 19 above.

31. Toward Women in Love, pp. 247-248.

outside the novel, as he does in discussing the maimed soldier, to find its meaning and the reason for its obscurities. When for example he discusses Gerald's adherence to the word 'harmony', a reference to 'The Crown' becomes essential: 'For Lawrence the mystic word harmony must refer, if it refers to anything, to the transcendence achieved by opposing forces which the crown symbolised.³² Statements of this sort are helpful but leave out the question of how much the characters of Women in Love are formed by theories already debated and stabilised outside the novel. Information about thought-processes that took place inside and outside the novel cannot be merely gathered up and used to explain Lawrence's attitude towards reduction when it is the text of the novel which one is supposed to be discussing. Many of Miko's comments, like the one above, imply that the text leaves out helpful information, but as to why this is no reason is given. Miko is actually saying, in the above sentence quoted, that the meaning of harmony, or of the phrase: 'the mystic word harmony', is obscure and may even mean almost nothing. He then uses 'The Crown' to explain its meaning.

'The Crown' has also been claimed by Mark Kinkead-Weekes as an essential complementary work to Women in Love.³³ He argues that Lawrence revised the section of The Sisters which became The Rainbow in order to explore possible causes for Ursula's attraction to Birkin, and her dissatisfaction with a previous lover. The foundations for Women in Love were therefore laid after its con-

32. Toward Women in Love, p. 252.

33. Mark Kinkead-Weekes: 'The Marble and the Statue: The Exploratory imagination of D.H. Lawrence', Imagined Worlds ed. Gregor, (1968). pp. 371-418.

ception, it is argued, although the actual nature of Lawrence's 'exploratory imagination' in Weekes's term, is not exactly comparable with the word 'imagination' used in this thesis. Weekes's use of the term 'imagination' implies that Lawrence in The Rainbow and Women in Love worked by excavating fictional possibilities suggested to him by ideas he conceived while writing 'The Crown' and the 'Study of Thomas Hardy'. Without these two essays it seems once again that Lawrence's novels would have been less easy to explain or understand.

In the passages quoted at the beginning of this section, and particularly in the first passage, Lawrence comes close to identifying with the maimed soldier in the same way for example as could be spoken of by Keats in his idea of 'negative capability': 'I could see him under chloroform having the leg amputated'. In the second passage he comes closer to identifying with the women admirers. Though the imagination was stimulated, and the mind's eye unveiled, 'the bitterness of the war' still has to be taken for granted when reading Women in Love and this fact is supported by Ford's analysis of the novel. Ford sees 'clear gains' for the novel as a result,³⁴ but the distancing effect which he recognises and applauds is one which had not appeared in Lawrence's fiction up to Women in Love. The intensity with which Lawrence set about analysing his reactions to evidence of the war in letters and essays, however, only brings out the extraordinariness of the phenomenon. The: 'passionate struggle into conscious being', continued to preoccupy the author of a novel in which the major character has to decide

34. Double Measure, p. 171.

whether such a struggle need be attempted, or whether it would do any good. His capacity for such a response, however, did not need to be proved. In the new stage that had been reached it is ironic that actual definition of the destructive forces, such as those located in the maimed soldier, should be omitted. In explaining what 'the horror' is in Women in Love Ford cites details from letters to Gertler, letters about Cornish people (whose souls were like black beetles), the story 'St. Mawr' and Lawrence's researches into anthropology and other outside sources.³⁵ Ford admits that: 'because many of the misunderstandings of Women in Love originate in an inadequate recognition of what the horror, or horrors, might be, we must...seek out a confrontation', and quotes from letters as a guide. On the other hand he pleads that in sublimating the actual facts of 'the horror' Lawrence had achieved 'clear gains'. But the facts, although perhaps too material, if left out do invite even Ford's curiosity. Ford, like many other readers, approaches a stable account of the novel by using outside sources as notes, and parts of the text itself as oblique indications, and by trying, with considerable success, to bring these two together. It is significant that many readers, as Ford claims, are puzzled by what 'the horror' is. Had Birkin explained why the African statue was: 'one of his soul's intimates', by a process of imaginative enquiry into more personal experiences, such guessing and speculation would not be required and would not, in all likelihood, have occurred.

Standing apart from the body of criticism which apportionns failure to Gerald and Gudrun, and success to Birkin and Ursula, is

35. Double Measure, p. 182.

Colin Clarke's study River of Dissolution. Although the terms evolved by Clarke are based on those of the Romantic tradition, as the subtitle of his book indicates,³⁶ his discussion of the 'Moony' chapter, in which Birkin's stoning of the Moon is repudiated by Ursula, does have some bearing on the arguments of this thesis. Clarke's central theme is that Lawrence's concept of dissolution is one which is inclusive of, not destructive to, powerful life-giving forces whose presence in the collective and individual psyche ought to be welcomed. Where disintegration exists, as in earlier forms of the tradition in 'The Ancient Mariner' and the vision of the water-snakes for example, it must be accepted. When it is denied or resisted, renewal may be delayed, perhaps permanently. An opposite outcome to the one in Coleridge's poem ensues when, in Women in Love, Gerald Crich's father sets his will against the dark forces that have haunted all his attempts at goodness and charity and now threaten to destroy him. Such a situation is maintained, Clarke explains, by: 'the false integrity of the will'. Tension between dissolution and individuality will result he admits in: 'some of the finest moments in the novel... those when tribute is paid at one and the same time to both these agencies. A case in point is the episode at Willey Pond...'³⁷ The question Birkin asks, as shown in the previous section of this chapter, of whether individuality is possible, is elaborated by Clarke as being what kind of individuality this should be, and he considers the episode

36. Colin Clarke: River of Dissolution,
D.H. Lawrence and English Romanticism. (1969).

37. Ibid. p. 99.

when Birkin throws stones at the moon's reflection on the water.

Evidence for what Lawrence meant by the episode is either taken from outside sources, in this case an illuminating quotation from *Trigant Burrow*, or pieced together from images of darkness and radiance as connected with individuality earlier in the novel, and associated with female characters. The moon in Clarke's view is a symbol for Ursula's conscious idea of herself, of who she is. As he rightly points out: 'Ursula is oppressed with a sense that the moon is constantly watching her - in other words that she is being constantly watched by her own self.'³⁸ Mrs. Morel and Elizabeth Bates also possessed an 'onlooker' aspect which needed to be destroyed, and Ursula may indeed be a final representative of this type of woman, although, and in this case she sets a precedent, the actual instances of her self-consciousness or propensity to judge others and herself and adhere to one image of self, is not given in the novel. Clarke's quotation of Lawrence's review of *Burrow* does offer insight into the connection between this episode and imaginative response where the response is insufficient and its results destructive:

And gradually Dr Burrow realized that to fit life every time to a theory is in itself a mechanistic process, a process of unconscious repression, a process of image-substitution. ...Perhaps the most interesting part of Dr Burrow's book is his examination of normality. As soon as man became aware of himself, he made a picture of himself. Then he began to live according to the picture. Mankind at large made a picture of itself, and every man had to conform to the picture: the ideal. ...The true self is not aware that it is a self. A bird as it sings, sings itself. But not according to a picture. It has no idea of itself.

And this is what the analyst must try to do: to liberate

38. Colin Clarke: River of Dissolution,
D.H. Lawrence and English Romanticism. (1969), p.105.

his patient from his own image, from his horror of his own isolation and the horror of the 'stoppage' of his real vital flow.

...Men must get back into touch. And to do so they must forfeit the vanity and the 'noli me tangere' of their own absoluteness: also they must utterly break the present great picture of a normal humanity: shatter that mirror in which we all live grimacing: and fall again into true relatedness.³⁹

As dark waves invade Ursula's moon, so, Clarke asserts, Birkin acts as the agent of forces liberating her from fascination with her own image of herself. In his review of Burrow Lawrence seems to claim that forces destructive to the image forming process are paradoxically necessary to that process, that the image must be shattered before a true image can be reformed. Whether these forces are those represented by the dark waves on Willey Pond, even more whether they are analogous to the 'African process', as Clarke claims, it is for the reader to decide. Though the obscurity may be deliberate it is a matter of some importance to know what exactly is being said in Women in Love, especially if readers may claim that 'dissolution' can become a life restoring power. If the point were not a significant one we could happily accept Birkin's version of the episode: 'I wanted to see if I could make it quite gone off the pond'. Clarke claims that Birkin is trying to destroy Ursula's image of herself, or even his own image of himself, but from the text it seems that he hardly knows what he is doing and merely expresses frustration. Had he wanted to reconstitute Ursula's image of herself, however, there must have been more effective ways of doing it than by making a gesture that may appear symbolic to us but to the

39. Phoenix, pp. 377-82.

characters themselves must have appeared meaningless. In this scene it is not the characters' conscious thoughts which are given, it is not even their feelings, but their actions alone, and the reader is therefore left to complete the motive for himself. In doing this, I have argued, the reader must acknowledge the essential uniqueness of the responsibility being offered to him, for in earlier works Lawrence made it clear what interpretation should be of most help, and even the characters themselves rarely let an event or action pass without some exploratory comment as to why it happened. It is significant first of all that the moon episode calls forth so much commentary from the readers of Women in Love and so little, if any, from the characters.

Some of the most helpful comments about this scene have been made by Eliseo Vivas, who admits to being baffled precisely because we do not know from their actions what the characters think. Speaking first of the occasion when Gudrun dances before the cattle in 'Water Party' Vivas remarks: 'That Gudrun should want to dominate the male is understandable. But the scene, the whole relationship, has another meaning: Gudrun sets out from the beginning to annihilate Gerald. The intention itself is clearly stated. But as to its motivation one is left wondering.'⁴⁰ The passages in which Birkin, having stoned the moon, decides to marry Ursula also leave Vivas wondering:

What kind of goodness and holiness have lapsed in these people... What did those who carved it (the statue) know that he himself did not?... Exactly what does Birkin mean by 'further sensual experience - something deeper, darker, than ordinary life'?...

40. Eliseo Vivas: The Failure and the Triumph of Art. (1960). p. 245.

Didn't Birkin, didn't Lawrence know what these phrases intended? A close reading of these three pages, so obviously freighted with meaning, discloses that they suggest vaguely, they intimate, they tease, and in the end they deny the reader the clear understanding he craves. Did Lawrence know the answers to these questions but chose not to tell us in so many words? I think he knew and did not dare tell.⁴¹

In this chapter I have argued that in giving attention to the pages Vivas refers to we must first of all acknowledge that the answers are not given, that Birkin talks about a symbol, an idea, a process, but not about the experiences out of which he constructs the ideas. The debate in those pages, it is concluded, is about whether the process or idea is a universal one or not, whether it applies to Birkin just as much as to Gerald, Halliday, Minette and Gudrun and Hermione, or whether there is a chance for him to alienate himself from it and choose a condition of freedom. As such then, the experiences are not required to be exposed. The question about them is not what they are but whether they are involuntary. If he is forced to find meanings for the symbols described by Birkin or enacted by him in the shattering of the moon, the reader can do no more than express his own point of view, creating his own meanings where Lawrence leaves them obscure. Both Vivas and Clarke reject the view offered by Leavis, that: 'In Birkin's married relations with Ursula the book invites us to localise the positive, the conceivable and due-if only with difficulty attainable - solution of the problem; the norm, in relation to which Gerald's disaster gets its full meaning.'⁴² Birkin's attraction to the death process

41. Eliseo Vivas: The Failure and the Triumph of Art. (1960). p. 263.

42. F.R. Leavis; D.H. Lawrence, Novelist. (1955) p182.

is a positive one, they claim, and needed to be fulfilled, hence the attack on the moon and the attempt to dissolve it. Both assume, however, that the dissolution of the moon is the universal dissolution Birkin also fears, but which, when stabilised, could be a revitalising force, darkness and light forming a compatible coexistence. In this, their view accords with that put forward by Kinkead-Weekes. It is Leavis's possible misunderstanding of: 'the forces that make for life', with which they find fault.

In this final section it has been argued that it is Lawrence's abandonment of the process of evolving images, symbols, or interpretations from the presented experiences and initiatory observations of the characters that leads readers of Women in Love to make subjective judgements or to look outside the text for clues to its author's intentions. This view is consistent with Kinkead-Weekes's argument that Lawrence himself had the ideas and images evolved through 'The Crown' and 'Study of Thomas Hardy' strongly in mind during the reconstruction of The Sisters into The Rainbow and Women in Love. The conclusion must be that Lawrence was therefore concerned less to interpret experiences, than to contrast and so understand different kinds of interpretations or responses to experience: that of Gerald or Hermione for instance, with that of Birkin, and to try to work out a meaningful picture of how these differing possible interpretations were related. Almost every character in Women in Love, and certainly Gerald, Hermione, Gudrun and Loerke, are denied the power to: 'put things right', or change the ruling principle of their lives. Only Birkin is able to believe that in striving for a glimpse of the complete picture, as he does when

considering marriage to Ursula, he might hopefully transcend it.

CONCLUSION: The Road to Italy.

Gerald Crich's remark in Women in Love; 'You can't put a thing right once it has gone wrong', is rejected in Etruscan Places with Lawrence's declared faith in 'divination': 'Whatever object will bring the consciousness into a state of pure attention in a time of perplexity, will also give back an answer to the perplexity,' and in Apocalypse, his last prose work: 'When anything very important is to be decided we withdraw and ponder and ponder until the deep emotions are set working, and we 'know what to do'.' Birkin's decision to marry Ursula is a restatement of belief in the usefulness and possibility available to his generation for putting things right. With this decision, the road to Italy was taken, and the lost impasse in which Gerald died was supervened. But the journey to Italy had begun much earlier, with Lawrence's first 'real' poems, in which he attempted to understand his own experiences by creating images through observations and feelings.

This thesis has been an attempt to trace this journey, or line of development which came to involve an actual journey, up to the point where Lawrence nearly lost faith in it, and with it the hopes he held for civilisation and his own fulfilment. The link between these two began to appear only at a certain stage of the way, and were firmly established in Women in Love. Autobiographical facts have been considered, but they are required at some times more than others, and the reasons for their inclusion have rested predominantly upon close study of the texts, and where available the author's revisions. The claim has been made implicitly that while Lawrence may not have been at every stage conscious of the aspect here shown

to have been present in his work, it is one which he came to discover and assert as being of key importance to that work.

The recurrence of contrasting types of characters in his fiction, the fascination for the material world in its natural and man-made forms in his poetry, the swift developments in his style after his exploratory, autobiographical novel, Sons and Lovers are the three main elements to emerge from this study of the early works. While these conclusions may not be very surprising, the clear connexions between them that emerge once the matter of imaginative response is considered, are more so. Imaginative discovery was hardly an end in itself. As was seen in the case of the rainbow symbol, and Anna Brangwen's quarrel with Will in Lincoln Cathedral, its presence marks unresolved experience. The need to question, to observe, to acknowledge ambivalence in one's reactions, resulted in the main from discontent. But imaginative discovery was also a sign that human aspiration had not lagged, that the struggle went on and the journey to fulfilment could be sustained.

As in Lydia, and also Birkin, sexual equilibrium resulted from an initial openness to the unconscious source, the 'decided positive' whose images point the way to moral freedom. Lawrence was perhaps optimistic in believing that this source was ultimately benign. Somewhere between Hermione Roddice: 'watching... (her) naked animal actions in mirrors', and Will Brangwen: 'some mysterious animal that lived in the darkness under the leaves and never came out', lies the balance between onlooker and participant that in his works and travels after Women in Love Lawrence still sought to define. But the motives of these characters, like those who adopt class values or intellectual knowledge as substitutes for

their 'maximum self',¹ were, in the end, merely paths towards self-confinement, and a limited compromised stability. Lawrence in his own case exchanged these for adventure, the urge to complete the picture of human impulse without denying its variety. This urge saved him from the malevolent impasses in which many of his characters become entrapped.

It has been one aim of this thesis to establish the importance of the outer world not only in Lawrence's ideas, but in his method, in its effect on his style. He was a greater descriptive writer for being an analytical one, and wrote often of the relationship of man to his 'circumambient universe'. Although this was a lesser relationship than the one of man and woman in his thought, it did exert an equally strong, if not stronger influence on his style in both prose and verse, as many of his more successful poems continued to be explorations into this relationship, and almost all his characters collect their thoughts at one time or another by attending to some aspect of their surroundings which they find peculiarly significant. It cannot be forgotten, once the importance of response has been established, just how conscious Lawrence was of the possible kinds of response to experience and to the world there were, and how much the territory of response was itself explored during the long process that led eventually to the Etruscan tombs. Lawrence would not have agreed, had it been said that the Etruscans were a dead and forever forgotten race. The 'Etruscan element'

1. The character who refuses to abandon her hope of experiencing the 'self at its maximum' is, significantly, Ursula. See The Rainbow. p. 303.

he claimed, continues despite conquest. It reappears just like
'the grass of the fields, it will always be so ', and he wrote
constantly of them as if they were still alive:

Here, in this faded Etruscan painting, there is a quiet flow
of touch that unites the man and the woman on the couch, the
timid boy behind, the dog that lifts his nose, even the very
garlands that hang from the wall.²

FINIS

2. Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places. p. 143.

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